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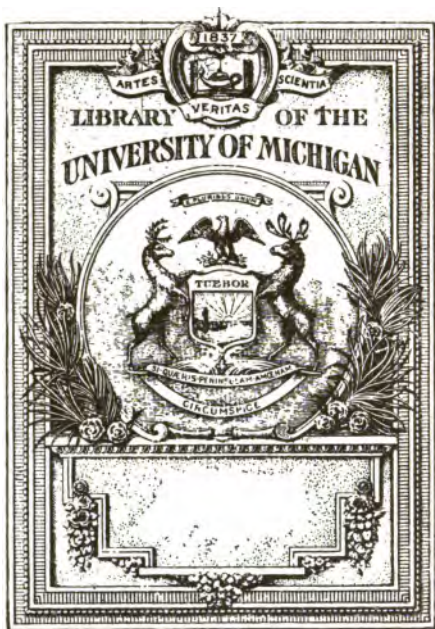
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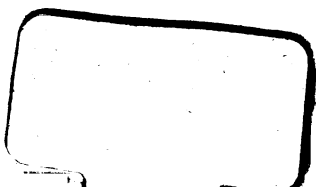
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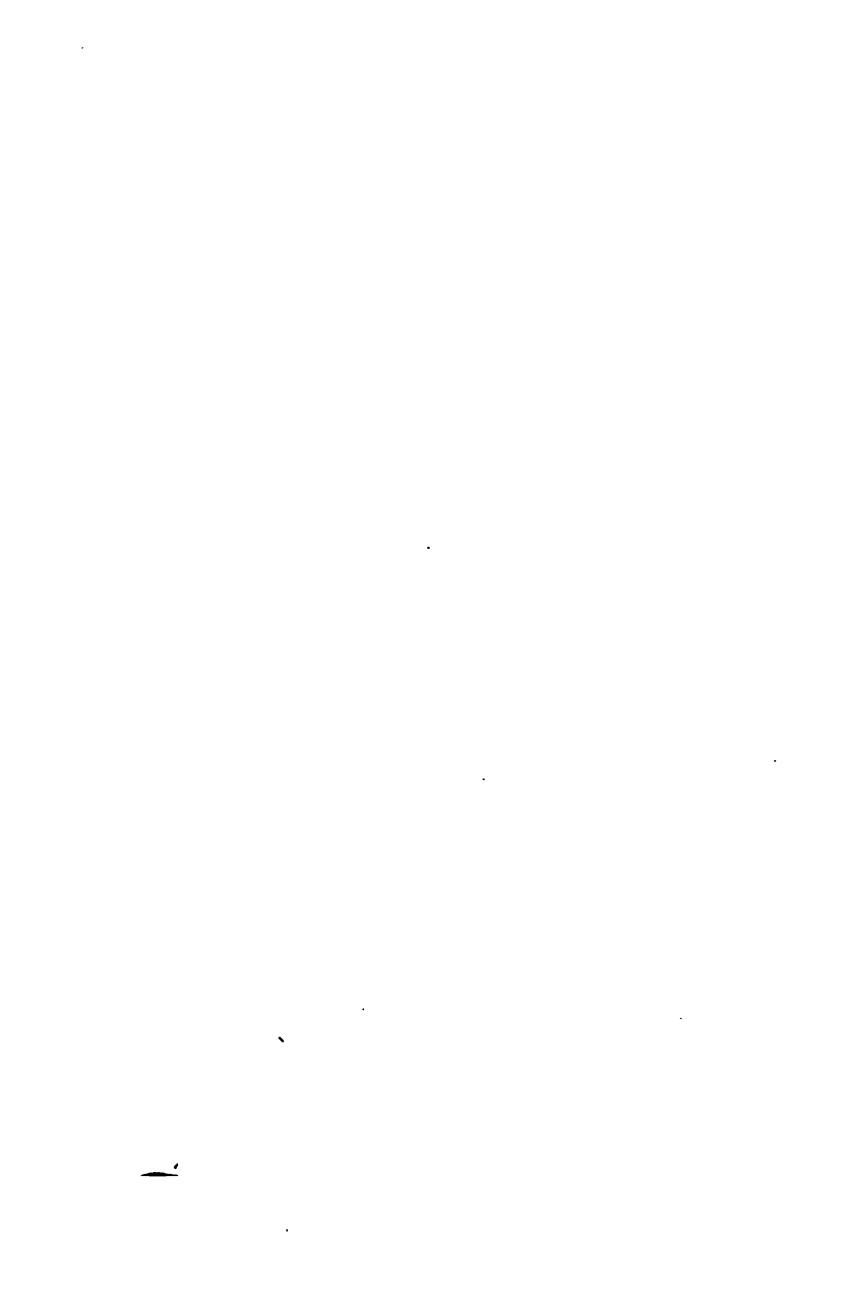


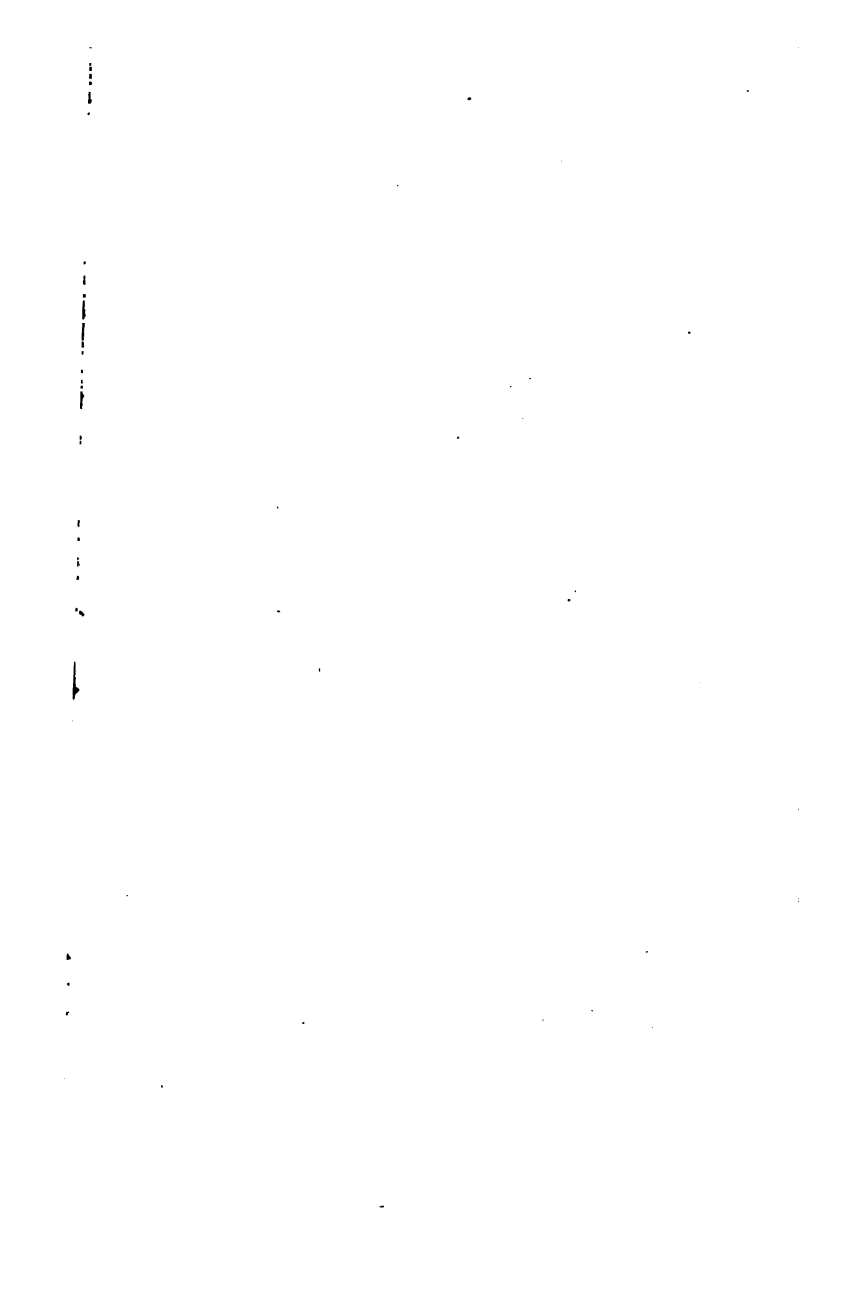
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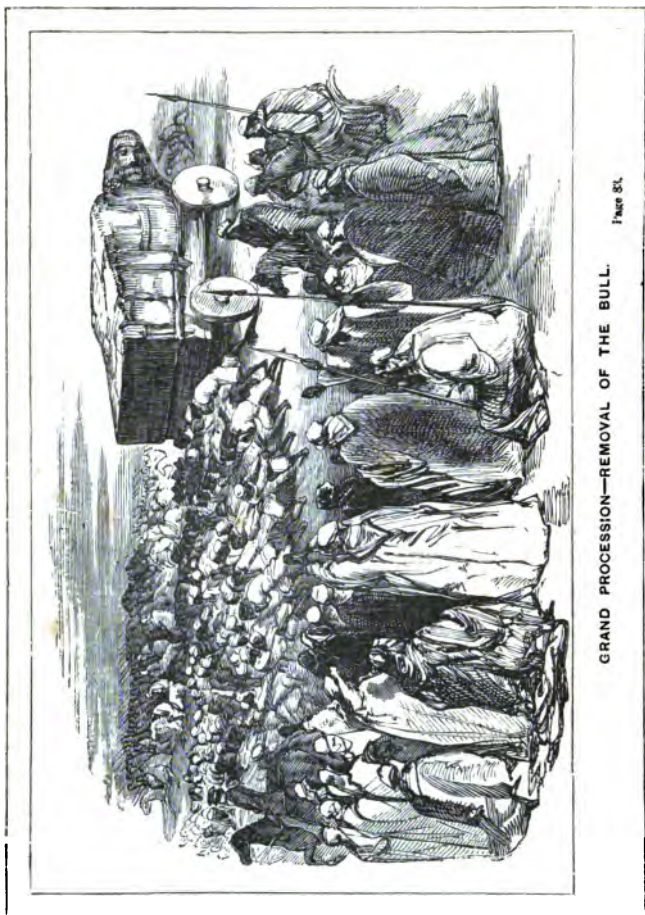
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GRAND PROCESSION—REMOVAL OF THE BULL.



N I N E V E H

AND

ITS STORY.

By



M. JONES,

*Author of "The Black Prince," "Stories from European History,"
"Stories from English History," &c.*

"The burden of Nineveh."—NAMES I. I.

LONDON:

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Preface.

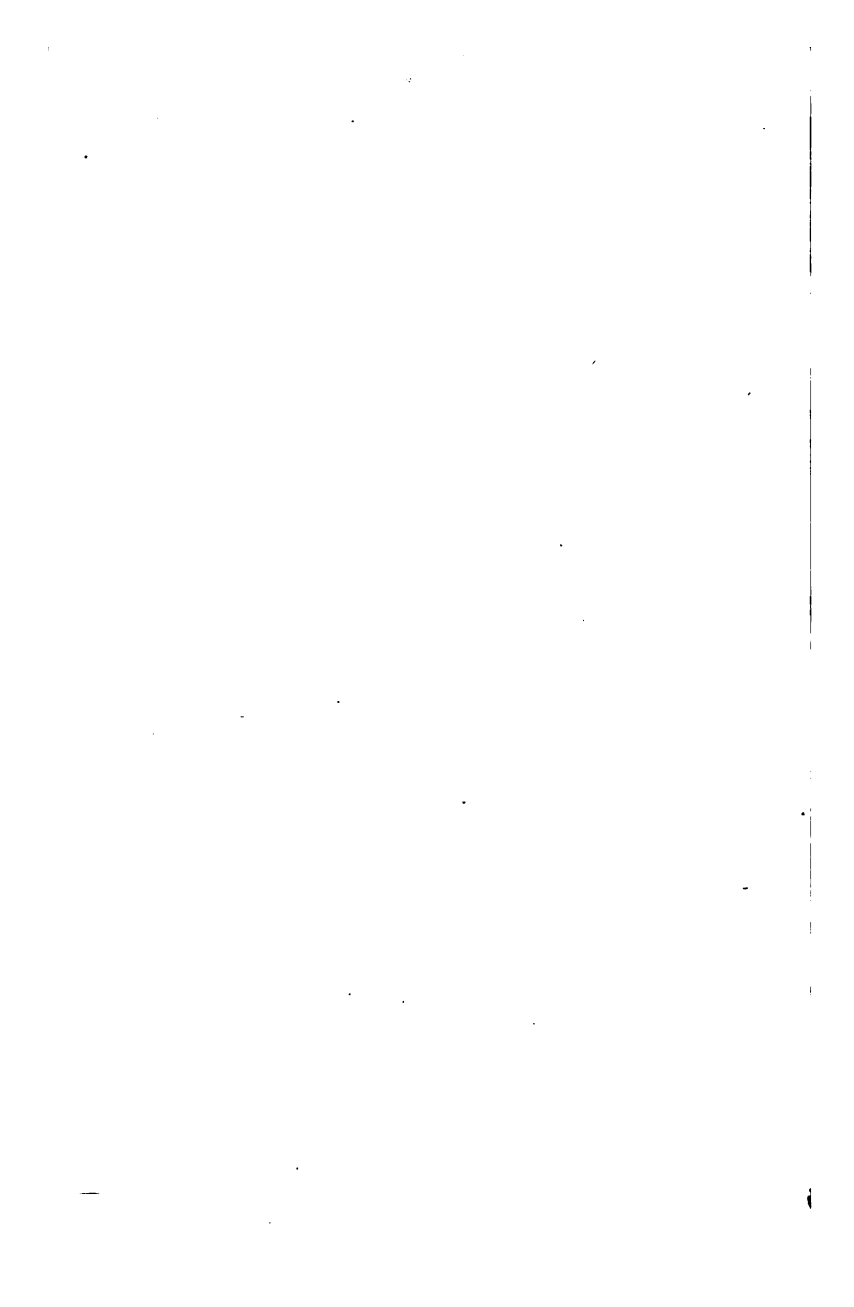
IN giving some slight account of the recent discoveries in old Assyria, I have, by most courteous permission, availed myself not only of Mr. Layard's singularly interesting volumes, but of those not less interesting, and covering a wider space, of the Rev. Professor Rawlinson of Oxford, whose "Ancient Monarchies" is perhaps one of the most fascinating historical works of modern times. Facts no one can invent. But, selecting from these and other publications such facts as my purpose required, I have narrated them strictly in my own words, and woven them into my own story. For the substantial facts of my last two chapters I am more especially indebted to the learned Professor.

M. J.

LONDON, July 1866.

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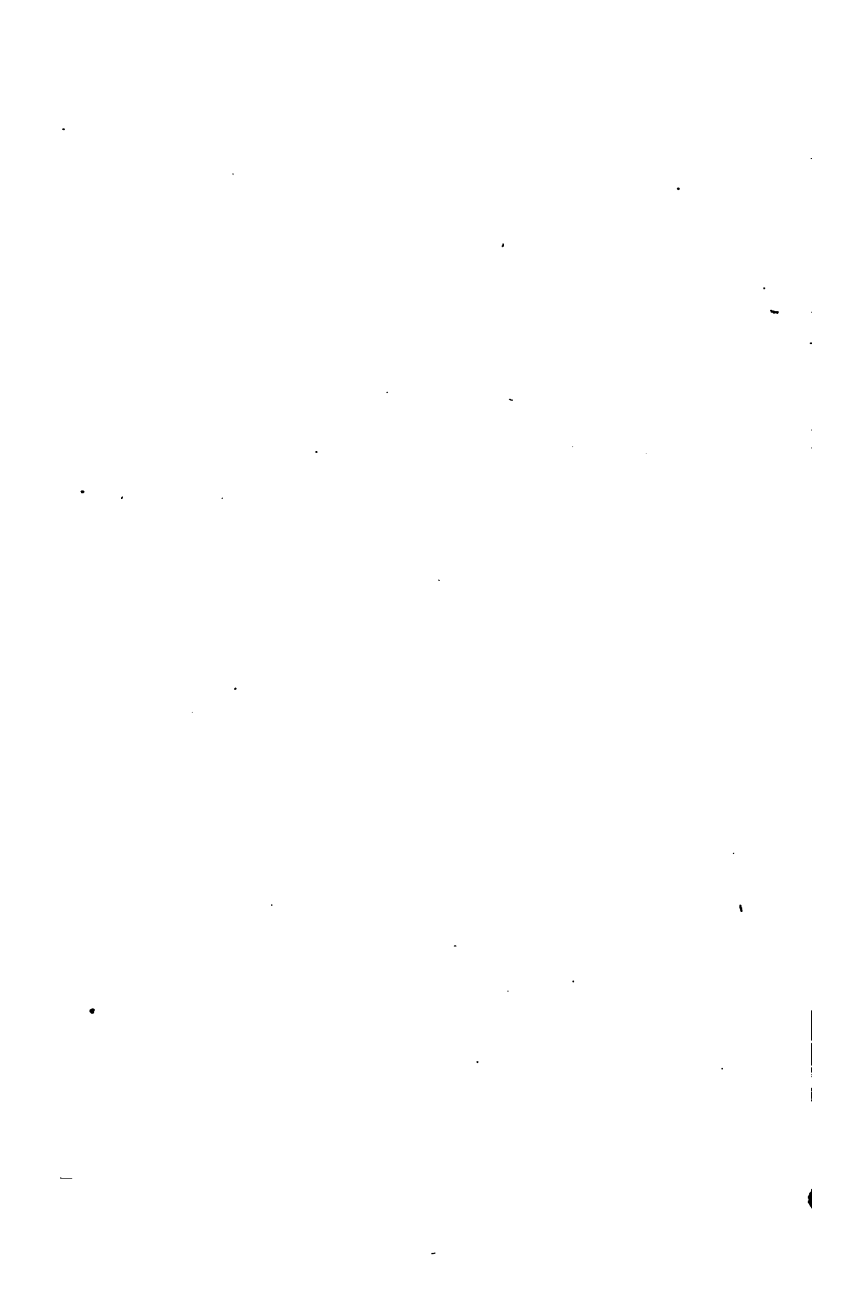


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NINEVEH AND ITS STORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE MIGHTY EMPIRE.

THE Empire of Assyria was once one of the greatest in the world. We learn this both from secular ancient history and from the Bible. Herodotus, the first great uninspired writer of history, tells us that the Assyrians were "lords of Asia" for more than five hundred years. The Bible brings this vast monarchy before us in various places. The country is first spoken of in Genesis, where we read that one of the rivers of the Garden of Eden had its course "toward the east of Assyria." In the same book, also, its original peopling is said to have been either by Nimrod, that "mighty hunter before the Lord," or Asshur, an officer, or perhaps general, under him. The translation of the verse in which this is mentioned is not quite agreed upon by learned men, so we must leave it where they leave it—uncertain whether it was by Nimrod in person or by deputy. Subsequently Assyria and its monarchs

appear as a plague to the Jewish people, and great oppressors of their kingdom, against whom the judgments of God are from time to time denounced. Its final destruction was foretold by Isaiah, who in glowing language predicts God's righteous vengeance on the "stout heart of the king of Assyria." This final overthrow was effected by the Medes, who having, as a Greek historian says, been defeated in three battles by the last Assyrian monarch, Sardanápálus or Saracus—there is some difficulty about the names of the Assyrian kings—at length, with the help of new allies, shut him up in his capital of Nineveh, which ultimately yielded to their arms. The despairing monarch would not survive his degradation. We are told that, collecting his family, his household, and his treasures, in the palace, he fired it with his own hands, when all perished together in the flames.

A coin dug up by an Arab in 1848, from a depth of twenty feet of earth, in Cilicia, has erroneously



COIN REPRESENTING THE TOMB OF SARDANAPALUS.

been supposed to represent the tomb of this unfor-

fortunate monarch. The coin itself is one of Antiochus VIII., King of Syria, and was struck at Tarsus.

Of the mighty empire of old Assyria, Nineveh and Babylon were the two greatest cities. Both names are familiar to us. We all remember how the prophet Jonah denounced the judgment of God against Nineveh, the capital of the empire, and then was angry himself because God spared it on the repentance of its inhabitants. We read of the size and wonderful population of the city in his days, when there were within it more than a hundred and twenty thousand who "could not discern between their right hand and their left:" little children that is, or, as it has been conjectured, the whole of its people, so spoken of for their utter ignorance of God's law. Secular writers tell us, with perhaps something of extravagance in their details, of its being a square of thirteen miles on each side, and that it was surrounded by a wall one hundred feet high, broad enough for three chariots to be driven on it side by side, and protected by fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet high. And though we cannot accept all of this—it is believed to be exaggerated—it yet sufficiently indicates the former magnificence of this now extinct city.

The Assyrians did not worship the true God. Like other heathen, they had "gods many;" but their chief deity was named Asshur. Of him the cut we give is supposed to be an emblem; the circle intended to represent eternity, as it does with us; the wings to indicate omnipresence; the figure itself wisdom. In early Assyrian sculptures this emblem appears to be the peculiar accompaniment or guardian

of the king himself, who is portrayed in various attitudes of devotion before it. It never accompanies



ASHUR, OR FEROTHER, FROM THE NIMRUD MARBLES.

any meaner person. Others imagine it to be simply a sort of angel, known in the ancient Persian religion as a *Feroher*. Where the learned cannot agree—and there are of necessity many points on which they cannot, especially where Assyria is concerned—it is impossible for us to decide; and much must, therefore, be left to conjecture. Spite of modern discovery and learning, which have brought to light a fund of information concerning this almost forgotten empire, the mist of the past still hangs thickly over its annals. Here and there we get a glimpse through it, and that is all.

We read in the Bible that Sennacherib, King of Assyria, was slain at Nineveh by his sons Adramemelech and Sharezer, while worshipping in the temple of "Nisroch, his god." Of this object of worship, an eagle-headed human figure, frequently repeated on the walls of the exhumed Assyrian palaces, and bear-

ing in its hand the sacred basket, has been supposed to be the representation: though here again it is doubted whether this may not be merely some symbolical figure the meaning of which has not yet been discovered.

In arts and manufactures the Assyrians must be considered rather advanced for the period. The merchants of Asshur—that is, of Assyria—are spoken of in the Book of Ezekiel as carrying to Tyre a varied merchandise of “blue clothes and brodered work,” with costly garments packed in chests of cedar wood, and securely bound with cords;—such garments and rich embroideries as are now made familiar to our eyes in the Nineveh sculptures. Their



EAGLE-HEADED FIGURE—NISBOCH.

architecture appears to have been striking and grand.

Their pictorial efforts, rude as are many of them, yet occasionally display a fire and life of portraiture absolutely amazing. The drawing may be bad; but there is the man, or the wild beast, instinct with life and vigorous action; and *that* is the essence of art. In agriculture we cannot suppose them to have been behind-hand. In the only representation that has yet been obtained of their plough, that instrument, it has been remarked, though simple in its construction, would bear comparison with the Turkish and Persian ploughs of modern times. But, indeed, it belongs to a very advanced state of agricultural skill, seeing it is evidently what is called a *drill* plough; that is, one that sows the grain instantaneously upon the withdrawal from the ground of the blade or plough-share. And this we reckon one of our modern improvements! Truly is it said, "There is nothing new that has not been old."

It has been laid to the charge of the Assyrians that they were cruel in war. They were cruel, but in all probability not more so than their neighbours. Those were not mild times, nor should we usually think of going to the East, either now or nearly three thousand years ago, to learn humanity. Nay, even in our latest specimen of that evil art, the art of war, and waged by Christians too, there were some especially harsh doings. The particular implements of war of this people were spears, swords, bows and arrows, battle-axes, maces or clubs, with battering-rams and movable towers;—just the panoply of our own middle ages, to whose defensive armour their array of helmets, shields, hauberks, greaves, and the like, are a

counterpart. Their military forces consisted of infantry, cavalry, and those who, as in classical and ancient British times, fought in chariots. Of their general manner of life little is, as yet, known.

What letters, what language, had this far-off, long-lost people? Look at a specimen of the characters used by them and kindred races of the period. They are called *cuneiform* characters, from the Latin word *cunei*, wedges, to which, as well as to arrow heads, they bear a strong resemblance. Generation after generation has passed away, leaving them unread, a standing puzzle to the learned. At length modern science and skill have caused these minia-



INSCRIPTION ON PILLAR AT MURGHAR.

ture darts and arrows, such as an idle child might make with his pen, instead of decorously writing his copy, yield up their simple record of the past; and little scraps of Assyrian history are from time to time

obtained by deciphering them. The translation of the strange-looking inscription that we give is—

“ I AM CYRUS THE KING, THE ACHÆMENIAN.”

It was discovered on a pillar of some ruins in the village of Murgháb in Persia,—supposed to be the site of another ancient city, that, like Nineveh, had passed away from mortal sight,—and consists of four words in the three different kinds of the cuneiform or arrow-headed writing. This Cyrus was Cyrus the Great, whose supposed tomb is also found near the same spot.



TOMB OF CYRUS.

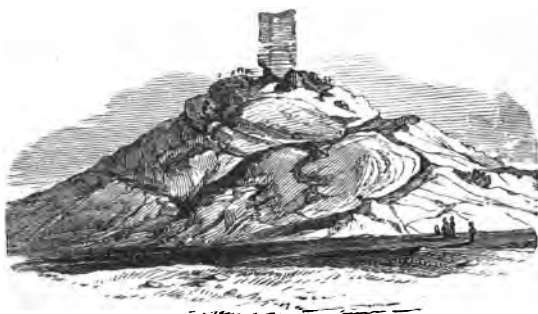


CHAPTER II.

THE LOST CITIES.

THE fall of Nineveh took place about the year 625 B.C. Its conquerors laid it waste, and carried away captive its inhabitants. From that time the poor remains of the city went to decay, until all trace of it, incredible as that may appear, had passed away from the earth. Alexander's invincible legions tramped over it in their progress to the far East, all unaware of the mighty monarchy that lay beneath their feet. What a satire on his greatness, had the Macedonian known it! Simple Arabs tended there their camels and sheep, or practised the slight husbandry of their race and climate, without a thought of the buried grandeur over which their scanty harvest waved. The vast city had indeed become—as Inspiration had said it should—"a desolation, and dry like a wilderness," in the midst of which "flocks should lie down." The mere site of Nineveh, like that of Babylon, was left to conjecture: vast mounds of earth, on the courses of the Euphrates and the Tigris, marking, as it was thought, the places where these great cities had once stood.

In 1811, however, some light began to break in upon this darkness. In that year Mr. Rich, an English gentleman who, in the service of the East India Company, occupied a political post at Baghdád, in Persia, examined what was supposed to be the site of Babylon. Among other objects that arrested his attention was the huge mound, surmounted by ruined masonry, called by the natives the Birs-i-Nimrúd, that is, Nimrod's Tower, which has long



BIRS-I-NIMRUD.

been imagined to be the remains of the Tower of Babel. Modern investigation rejects this; and the more recent notion that it was the ruins of the great Temple of Belus, described by Herodotus as one of the glories of Babylon, seems also giving way before the facts elicited by the latest explorers, and readers of the cuneiform inscriptions discovered there, though this view of it led Mr. Rich to regard it as assisting him in fixing the site of the ancient city. The height of this remarkable mound, from its base to

the highest part of the brick-work which crowns it, is two hundred and thirty feet; and it bears, we are told, evident marks of having been destroyed by violence. The greater part of the bricks used in the building are the common sun-dried ones of the country; others, most probably used as a facing for these, as at Nineveh, are of fine burnt clay; the whole so well cemented together, that it is almost impossible to separate without breaking them; and they bear arrow-head inscriptions. Some portions of the brick-work are absolutely vitrified by the action of fire, so that when struck they ring like glass. In the days when these ruins were assumed to be those of the Tower of Babel, this effect was looked upon with mysterious awe, as traces of fire from heaven itself, when builders and work alike were scattered by supernatural agency. The most recent conjecture is, that it was an ancient Babylonian custom thus to vitrify their brick-work, after its erection, for its better preservation; though in what manner fire, to so intense a degree, could be applied to standing walls, does not appear. Portions of vitrified brick-work are still found in other parts of the country, where, we are told, they are in some inexplicable way connected with an old legend about Nimrod's having thrown Abraham himself into a furnace!

The Jews of the neighbourhood were wont to call the Birs by the name of Nebuchadnezzar's Prison; and the name of that monarch appears upon all the bricks of it that have been examined. Sir Henry Rawlinson's examination of the mound in 1854, con-

vinced him that it was the remains of a great temple originally built by a Babylonian king in the twelfth century before Christ, and re-edified, after having fallen into decay, by Nebuchadnezzar, about the year B.C. 580.

Under Mr. Rich's directions, diggings were made in the supposed ruins of the city, whence a few inconsiderable relics were obtained. The chief value of his labours lay in his general identification of the remains around with the site of the great city itself. Some years later, Sir Henry Rawlinson, to whom, with Dr. Hincks, we are chiefly indebted for the



DOG, FROM BIRS-I-NIMRUD.

deciphering of the long-puzzling arrow-headed inscriptions, made some researches among the ruins of the Birs, where he found a thin tile, bearing in re-

lief—that is, raised from the surface—a spirited group of man and dog. A species of hound, it appears to be, held in a leash; and certainly a fellow like that, big, sinewy, fiery, yet withal good-tempered looking, would, one might think, find little difficulty in pulling down a lion. The life and *character* of this ancient sculpture are complete. The dog is said to be of a species still known in Thibet. Sir Henry's last examination resulted, as we have said, in settling, on the authority of his interpretation of the cuneiform writing, the question as to what this mysterious mound really was.

In 1820 Mr. Rich, travelling for his health, visited the mounds situated on the bank of the Tigris, opposite Mosul, and brought away with him a few cuneiform inscriptions, then unreadable. A block of sculpture had been unearthed, but immediately destroyed by the ignorant people of Mosul, under the impression that the figures of men and beasts upon it were idols. It was reserved for others to discover that here was the real burial-place of Nineveh the Great.

The first of these fortunate discoverers was a Frenchman named Botta, French consul at Mosul. In 1843 he began excavating in the mound on the river side directly opposite to Mosul, in that portion of the mound which had been supposed to be one of the ancient fortifications of the lost city. The French consul's spades and mattocks, however, did him little good in this spot. A few bricks with cuneiform inscriptions, and similar darts and wedges on stones, were all that rewarded his efforts, which

were perhaps on too small a scale to be of much use: *real* excavating of Assyrian mounds is no trifle. Presently, however, the country folks about, seeing him hard at work digging up such things, brought him from time to time pieces of brick and alabaster that fell in their way. Doubtless they thought the Frank, or infidel, as they politely call all Christians, must be out of his senses, to be grubbing away in the dirt after that fashion; but this was not their business—infidels *are* inscrutable to your true Orientals. So they humoured him; and at last one of the brightest of them, noticing that of the fragments thus brought every one bearing an inscription was put carefully aside, advised the consul to try his chance in the village where he himself lived, as he said many such things had been found there in digging for the foundations of houses. This village was called Khorsabád, and was about five hours' journey north-east from Mosul. Thither, accordingly, the Frenchman repaired, and set to work with fresh zeal, reaping a rich harvest of inscriptions and sculptures. Indeed, he ultimately "bought out" the inhabitants of the village, and turned the whole place upside down, unearthing such a collection of halls, rooms, passages, with sculptured alabaster walls, as showed that some royal tenement had been reached. This was the first genuine Assyrian ruin that was excavated; and subsequent researches established the fact that the building thus brought to light by Botta was the palace of that King Sargon spoken of in the Bible, who began his reign about the year 721 B.C. Among the sculptures here dis-

covered were human-headed bulls, very similar to those with which Mr. Layard has made us familiar; together with various bas-reliefs of battle-pieces and domestic life. The bulls, as at Nimrúd, flanked the principal entrance of the palace.

One of the slabs thus turned up was a particularly spirited one of a two-horsed chariot, with highly ornamented wheels, and which contained three persons, one of them apparently a king, as an attendant held a fringed parasol over his head. This principal figure carried a bow in his left hand; the third occupant was the charioteer, with whip and reins. The harness of the horses was exceedingly rich, including plumes for their heads and ornaments for their chests. Another slab represented a siege: warriors are scaling the walls; one sinks wounded by an arrow; the castle is in flames; and the besieged are evidently abandoning themselves to despair. Yet another presented a vivid battle incident—chariots, and mailed warriors, dead and dying, with their steeds ramping over the prostrate forms: while a fresh slab showed persons seated, each one at a table (one of the tables appeared to be covered with a table-cloth), with servants bringing in dishes, or fanning their masters—for the old Assyria was a terribly hot place; nor is the climate at all mended by its present desolation. From the large quantity of charcoal found among these buried remains, it was conjectured that the building had been destroyed by fire.

Botta's collections were, of course, forwarded to Paris; for his Government helped him munificently.

Subsequent labours at Khorsabád procured for England her first specimens, on a large scale, of Assyrian antiquities, among which was a remarkably fine group of a groom leading two horses. There is wonderful fire and vigour in this design, with a certain quiet dignity withal. The calm look of power about the man, as though he thoroughly understood his business, makes one certain that even those fiery-eyed horses would never run away with



GROOM LEADING HORSES.

their groom, be he Assyrian or not : by some he is supposed to be a foreigner. The elaborate trappings of the horses show the usual ornaments of Assyrian steeds, as made known to us by their sculpture : rich collar, pendent tassels, plumes, crests, and bandeaux—a sort of compound of our hussar, rush-

bearing, and funeral caparisons. The hair and beard of the man, arranged in stiff corkscrew curls, are also strictly after the Assyrian fashion: king and groom alike wore their beards thus. The hair was often worn longer behind, resting upon the shoulders, much after the manner in which young ladies, a few years ago, were pleased to wear theirs, in a net. His dress appears to be the ordinary one of the lower classes: a sort of loose body-garment, with short sleeves, girt round the waist, and reaching almost to the knee. Kings and great men were privileged to wear their dresses long; and as these were very scanty from the waist downwards, they must have enjoyed the further privilege of being more cramped in their movements than were their meaner neighbours. But who, ancient or modern, ever found the insignia of rank inconvenient! His having no ear-rings evidences that this handsome groom was a very common person indeed, as few save such were, by Assyrian custom, which "makes the law," exempt from the necessity of wearing these most extraordinary additions to costume. An astounding, nay, barbarous custom this, to make holes in one's very person for the purpose of sticking ornaments in them! Those who love jewellery and the like might, one would think, be content with heaping it *on* themselves, and stop short of actually inserting it in their unfortunate muscles: the thing is only fit for the Sandwich islanders, and they ought to have outgrown it by this time. Some of the ear-rings sculptured seem to be delicately formed and designed.

Later, that is in 1849, Colonel Rawlinson added to our Assyrian treasures from Khorsabád a stupendous figure in relief, thirteen feet high, who or what is unknown, save that it is at least semi-divine. It is winged, robed, sandaled, bearing the sacred basket in one hand and the fir-cone in the other; which, from the position of the figures in their original site, he appears to be offering to the winged bull by which he stands.

This figure presents us with the costume and ornaments of the higher classes of the Assyrians. There is the long, scanty, fringed robe: fringe appears to have been an ornament "of all work" with that people. The embroidered cross-belt, also fringed deeply, passing from the left shoulder to the right side, supported a sword, where that was worn. This was usually short and straight—a thrusting weapon—with a tastefully ornamented sheath: the curved sword was rare. The under garment here is either a very short tunic, or equally short drawers, fringed and ornamented. The prodigious beard and exuberant hair are arranged in the usual elaborate manner: like the Egyptians, the Assyrians made much of their hair. That of this figure looks exceedingly like what is called a *porter's knot*; that is, a thick pad or cushion, kept in its place by a strap round the head, that porters wear on their shoulders to enable them to carry heavy weights with less inconvenience to themselves, and less chance of their burdens tumbling off. The horned cap, or tiara, shows the sacred character of the figure, of which the fruit in the right hand, and sacred basket in the left, are also indica-



WINGED FIGURE.

tions. The fruit is variously rendered as fir-cone, pine, pomegranate, Indian corn: its meaning, and that of the satchel, constantly found in the hands of sacred figures, is unknown. Professor Rawlinson, in his beautiful work on the Ancient Monarchies, offers the conjecture that the fruit may be an emblem of productiveness, the highly-ornamented basket may represent a repository of good gifts for the benefit of mortals.

The sandals here represented seem to be of the early Assyrian period—as figured by Rawlinson—a mere thin sole, with a catch for the heel. It was fastened by a loop through which the great toe passed, and by strings from the heel part across the instep. Shoes did not come in until later, and then were clumsy enough. The lower classes wore Nature's leather; that is, they went with the feet bare.

The Assyrian gentleman's dress was incomplete without armlets and bracelets, such as those worn by this good genius. The armlets were commonly of plain metal, wrapping twice or thrice round the arm. The bracelets for those of high degree were often ornamented with one, two, or three rosettes, far from inelegant, and such as might be worn by any modern lady, from whose jewel-case, some of these, of more than two thousand years ago, might have been selected as specimens. They have spared *this* good genius the humiliation of ear-rings, such as their kings wore, but some of them are not let off so easily; there they stand, the winged creatures, with heavy pendants—enough to pull their ears off, one would fancy.

Before leaving Khorsabád, which we are going to

do for the present, we may as well mention that the name is thought to be compounded of Khosroes—the great Persian monarch who contended, with varying success, with the Roman Emperor Justinian—and the Oriental word *abad*, signifying town or city. In our Indian Empire there are numerous examples of names of places thus formed, embodying the names of their founders or possessors;—such as, *Hyderabad*, the city of Hyder; *Aurangabad*, that of Aurungzebe. Things are very much alike all the world over. We have the same custom in Europe, with our English *town* or *ton*, the French *ville*, and others, united to and following the names of various persons connected with them.

Mr. Layard, who followed M. Botta in Assyrian discovery, and was destined to obtain still more important results, comes next in order. But with him we must begin another chapter.





CHAPTER III.

EXCAVATING.

BOTTA was the first Assyrian discoverer, backed by his Government. Layard was the second, and much the more successful one, though lacking the powerful governmental help enjoyed by his predecessor. Shall we say this was a good specimen of what is called "British pluck," or shall we leave it unaccounted for, rather than use so very inelegant an expression? However it may be, it is pleasant to find such entire good feeling subsisting between the two. Scientific men and antiquaries are sometimes not very amiable with each other. At the risk of being again vulgar, shall we quote the old proverb in illustration of this, "Two of a trade can never agree"?—a proverb the truth of which was, in this instance, contradicted—all honour to both gentlemen.

The French consul began his operations in the ruins immediately opposite Mosul; and when advised by Mr. Layard to try his fortune at Nimrūd, some miles further down the Tigris, declined doing so, as he felt himself unequal to the additional labour involved in that scheme. So the important Nimrūd

fell to Mr. Layard's share in the business. It was no wonder that Botta declined the proposal. Digging up these ancient mounds, rubbish of between two and three thousand years' standing, is no slight undertaking, additionally embarrassed by the prejudices of ignorant, ill-disposed natives, and the effects of a wretched climate. Poor Botta suffered from both of these impediments. The miserable, undrained, uncultivated, *uneducated* neighbourhood—for soils and climates require *educating* (that word means bringing out qualities) as much as boys and girls do—made him violently ill; while his unfortunate labourers were maltreated, actually, with true Oriental barbarity, put to the torture, by the ruling powers.

The truth is, the poor ignorant folks out there cannot understand why people should come from a distance to dig up what they themselves have left unheeded for centuries; and therefore, after the manner of the world in such cases, what they cannot understand they attribute to bad, or at least mean motives—seeking for gold, or some such trash. Of course, once possessed with the notion that gold was the object of search, they thought they had the best right to it, if it was to be had; hence the annoyance and even persecution to which foreign explorers were subjected.

Mr. Layard's first arrival at Mosul was in the early part of 1842. While remaining there he visited Kalah Sherghât, supposed by some to be the site of the ancient city of Asshur, the original capital of Assyria. It was here that he subsequently brought to light one of the very few statues in *the round*, as

sculptors call it—that is, the entire figure, not a portion only of its surface, as in relief—that have



SITTING FIGURE FROM KALAH SHERGHAT.

been discovered among Assyrian remains, the greater number of them being simply in *relief*. This is a sitting figure, life size, minus both head and hands, and otherwise considerably knocked about. It is of black basalt—basalt is a very hard kind of dark-coloured stone—and both the mass of stone on which it is seated and the footstool are covered with the

arrow-headed or cuneiform inscriptions. From these it is elicited that the statue represents one of the early kings of Assyria, the son of Sardanápálus, the first of that name, who built the oldest palace at Nimród, so successfully explored by Mr. Layard. The tasseled robe, regally long, like that of the later figures, is still visible. No other piece of sculpture has been found in the principal ruin of this seat of the early Assyrian kings: other remains, stone walls well put together and carefully finished off, together with what appear to have been ramparts, mark it as the site of an important city.

In 1845 Mr. Layard again visited Mosul for the purpose of setting to work. Things did not look very favourable: the pasha, that is the governor, was an exceedingly unpleasant man; further, he was exceedingly ugly; and as his subordinates were as ugly, at least in mind and manners, as himself, the prospects of the explorers were anything but bright. Mr. Layard was, however, equal to the emergency: a hunting expedition—wild boars the game—was proposed into the district fixed upon for his first attempt—that is Nimród. Nimród is on the opposite bank of the Tigris from Mosul, and about twenty miles down the stream—thirty if you follow its windings. So with weapons to defend themselves against the wild hordes of the neighbourhood, and tools for the intended excavations, he left Mosul on the 8th of November, and arrived at Nimród by nightfall. Thanks to the tyranny of the pasha, one of whose ingenious taxes was for the “wear and tear” of his teeth in eating up the provisions of those subject to

him, the village was found ruined and deserted—a dusty, sandy, dreary place.

As there are two ways of doing everything, a right way and a wrong, we may as well give the right mode, that is, Mr. Layard's, of digging up Assyrian palaces. These buildings, he says, were always raised upon a basement or platform of bricks; as with us, on a bad soil, a layer of what is called *concrete* is often placed. When the building went to decay, it was, of course, bricks upon bricks—crumbling, sun-dried bricks; dust and sand, blown about in whirlwinds, soon buried the whole concern, leaving an indistinguishable mound of earth, in which a man might dig and delve his very heart out, without finding anything, unless he *chanced* to hit upon trace of building. The proper mode is to dig straight down to the brick platform, and when that is reached, dig on right and left upon its surface, when anything existing in the shape of building is sure to be struck.

Arrived at Nimrúd, to work they went. The head Arab workman was a jewel in his way—not only eager in the business, but actually to be trusted; his helpers were to match, and pottery, bricks, slabs, inscriptions greeted their first day's digging. It was heartening in the extreme. Further digging brought out evidence of a building engulfed, and that such building had been erected of materials from a preceding one—as we, now-a-days, build fine houses of old materials, only that our materials are perchance from some dirty old hovel, certainly not from a worn-out palace. In truth, this Assyrian palace, whose remains were being brought into daylight again, was

afterwards, by "making sense" of those marvellous darts and arrow heads, ascertained to have been built by the son of Esarhaddon (whose father was slain by two of his sons while "worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god"), who had knocked down an old palace to build himself a new one. There was some excuse for this, the composition of these Assyrian buildings, sun-dried bricks, being so peculiarly liable to decay, that a new house, like a new coat, became a thing of frequent necessity. In the very beginning of his excavation Mr. Layard had the good fortune to strike on one of the walls of a room in the entombed palace; so that he had but to follow its course, and then turn at a right angle, to make out the entire enclosure. Two of the sculptured slabs disinterred were so much injured by fire, which, it was apparent, had destroyed the building, that they could not be removed. The first of them was a battle-scene, representing warriors in chariots. It was only the monarch and men of high rank who fought in chariots, and that in the open field alone; when besieging a city or castle they got out, and did their best on foot.

The Assyrian chariots were two-wheeled vehicles, like the English *curricie* of some forty years ago, only set on wrong side before, the occupants getting in at the back; their general appearance suggesting a lively idea of the ease with which the said occupants might be tilted out. They were drawn by two or three horses, the third loosely attached; it is supposed merely to be in readiness in case either of the others should be disabled. They had long

tails, which are generally represented as tied mid-way, to prevent their flying all abroad. Very great people indeed, in addition to the driver of their chariot, who flourished a one, two, or three thonged whip, were attended by one or two shield-bearers, whose duty it was to protect their lord with their round shields; and these, owing to the shape and small size of the chariots, had to hold hard on by a strap fastened to the fore part of the vehicle: as with us a tiny groom manages to keep his footing behind his master's cabriolet. But this must have been rather an embarrassing arrangement where fighting was meant.

The second sculpture was that of the siege of a castle or city having walls; and the warriors were armed with shield, short sword, and bows, through which the left arm was passed, while the quiver hung at their backs. The besieged were discharging arrows and stones at their assailants, who were endeavouring to scale the defences and undermine the walls, while a woman appeared to be asking the mercy she was little likely to get. The second slab bore similar sculptures, also in low relief.

But the "course" of digging up ancient monuments, in a barbarous country, never does "run smooth." The Frenchman's workmen were maltreated; Mr. Layard's were abruptly stopped by a malicious and very gratuitous report, that they were digging up and desecrating old burial-grounds; while, to make good the charge, those who set the report a-going were at the pains to remove grave-stones from other places, and slightly cover them with soil

in the mound at Nimrúd, ready to be dug up by the excavators! Even this ingenious piece of malice was got over: Mr. Layard's patience and tact were equal to anything in the shape of difficulty, even though that difficulty arose out of Turkish obstinacy and maliciousness, which are perfect, after their kind; and the works were re-commenced. Fresh sculptures were now brought to light, most of them more or less injured by fire, exposure to the air—some stone crumbles almost into dust on contact with the atmosphere—or other causes. Lions big and little, winged bulls, a gigantic human figure, were among the results of the excavations; but these were still not deemed ample enough to show clearly the precise nature of the contents of that mysterious mound of Nimrúd, though the whole led to the conclusion that further researches would be rich in more definite results. So the tomb-stones which the pasha had been at the trouble of making, and telling lies about—how those Orientals *do* lie!—together with some real ones that had turned up, were removed preparatory to further research; and ultimately, by the agency of the English ambassador at Constantinople, such a permission as would enable him to carry on his operations without further vexatious hindrance, was obtained by Mr. Layard from the Sultan himself.

Meanwhile, early in the year 1846, so much more inspiring than the dreary, dusty, arid season when his explorations were first attempted, our countryman pitched his tent at Nimrúd, and prepared to make himself at home there for a while. His household arrangements were simple enough: three huts

formed the home; the furniture consisted of a few chairs, more useful than ornamental, a bed, and a table. But not even yet could he get on in quiet,—more plague from the *cadi* (that is, magistrate), and this time there was a two-fold complaint against the explorer. In the first place, it was asserted that he was digging up treasure, and carrying it off with him; in the second, that the inscriptions on which he set such store, tended to prove that the country had once belonged to the Franks, as they call us Europeans, who, on the strength of them, would immediately return and take possession of their property, killing all the true believers—meaning themselves—out of the way. Waiting until this storm, which was a very serious one, blew over, Mr. Layard employed himself in making friends with the Arabs who clustered about Nimrud, and who might have occasioned him much trouble from their bad habit of mistaking other people's property for their own. A trifle did it. The chief received him in his tent, which contained his whole family, including two Arab mares, and the baby of one of them. The presents offered for his acceptance were graciously received—for in the East it is still true, as it was in Solomon's days, that "a man's gift maketh room for him;" and he readily promised that in future he would keep himself to himself, and not steal his new friends' goods and chattels. So the time was not altogether wasted.

When the works were re-commenced, the sculptured slabs discovered were of a highly interesting character, though, unfortunately, some of them were

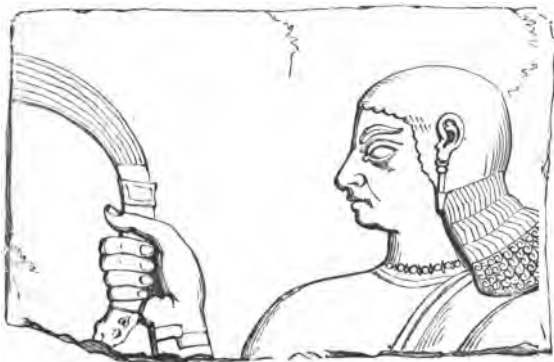
much injured by exposure to the air. Upon one of these was a king wearing the usual cap, shaped like a truncated cone, which, more or less ornamented, did duty for a crown among the Assyrian monarchs. Our cut affords a specimen of this. At his foot was



FRAGMENT OF KING'S HEAD.

a slain or wounded enemy, over whom he stood in an attitude either of worship or conquest, it is difficult to say which; for though the bow upon which the left hand rests would seem to indicate the latter, the right hand held partially aloft is generally, in these sculptures, understood to be a devotional attitude. Attendants wait upon the monarch, chief among whom is the usual beardless official of an Eastern court in ancient days, among whose duties were

those of holding a large parasol over his master's head, and switching the flies off him with a fly-flapper, which appears to have been a horse's tail, fixed in an ornamented handle. A lion's head was a favourite device for this purpose. Another fragment shows us this gentleman, or rather a portion of him, in larger size than do the bas-relief slabs, as well as the fly-flap which it was his distinguished post to wield. And with regard to the faces of



BEARDLESS ATTENDANT WITH FLY-FLAP.

both, notwithstanding the bad drawing, especially that of showing the whole eye in profile, we may remark that the Assyrians appear to have been a handsome people. This king's face is a good, bold, fine countenance. The Arabs, who, when they were fairly afloat, worked with great zest under Mr. Layard, used to kiss the beardless figures when they turned up, taking for granted they must be

ladies, instead of simply men without beards; while anything supposed to be of the nature of an idol was greeted with curses and spitting: for one good point among Mqhammedans is, that they hate idolatry with a perfect hatred.

The generally decayed state of the sculptures in the part of the building now laid open, led Mr. Layard to transfer his spades and picks to another portion of the mound, and that with most gratifying success, as it was soon apparent, from internal evidence, that the one now hit upon was the most ancient of the swiftly-decaying palaces of Nineveh. This was the one now known as the North-west Palace, built by the first Sardanapálus, or, according to his Assyrian name, Asshur-izir-pal. Two days' work brought them to a slab, bearing, in bas-relief, two more than life-sized winged human figures, drawn with unusual care, and knowledge of anatomy. The adherent rubbish being carefully removed, the sculpture was found to be in perfect preservation, clear and sharp as from the chisel. The figures stood back to back. The one wore a round cap with one horn, and bore in either hand the sacred basket, and the pine, or fir-cone—the accessories that usually accompany a sacred personage, angel, divinity, or whatever he may be. The other had an ornamental band round the head, with a rosette in front. Resting upon his right arm was a small fallow-deer, it is supposed as an offering for sacrifice. The left hand raised aloft a stiff, five-flowered branch, resembling the asafœtida plant. The dress of both consists of an upper long robe and short



FIGURE WITH FALLOW DEER.

tunic, richly embroidered and fringed. An inscription was traced, as usual, across the draped part of the figures, leaving the limbs untouched.

Not far from this beautiful slab was discovered the figure which we have already given in our first chapter, the eagle-headed one called Nisroch, under the supposition that it was intended to represent that Assyrian deity. The open mouth showed the tongue still coloured with red paint, faint traces of which were discernible also upon the hair, beard, eyes, and sandals, as well as on other portions of all these figures.

But the crowning discovery was yet to come, and that the very next day. On returning from a visit to the Arab encampment, Mr. Layard was met by two of these sons of the desert, who, reining in their galloping steeds as he approached, poured out a torrent of Oriental exclamations of wonderment, amid which was to be distinguished the astounding information that "Nimrod himself" had been found! It was somewhat puzzling; seeking Nimrod was not exactly Mr. Layard's errand in that wild place, but on reaching the trenches explanation was plain. There stood the workmen by something which they had covered with their upper garments and the baskets in which they removed the earth. Asking, of course, for a present, they pushed aside the covering, and, lo! rising out of the very ground, was a gigantic human head, with serene countenance, and bushy platted Assyrian hair and beard. The round, three-horned cap showed that it was one of the sacred figures, while other indications sufficed to in-

form the practised eye of the explorer that the sculpture was either a winged lion or bull, similar to those already discovered at Khorsabád and elsewhere. Mr. Layard was delighted. One of the Arabs was so frightened, that on first catching sight of it he took to his heels towards Mosul, where, in his terror, he did all the mischief that ignorant people are so specially clever at accomplishing—bringing pasha, cadi, and the whole other tribe of tormentors down upon the unfortunate Englishman who had ventured to grub up Assyrian palaces and nondescript beasts. Half the Arabs in the neighbourhood had meantime arrived, not omitting women and little children, to wonder, and admire, and be frightened like the others; for these simple people could not believe that it was any mere mortal handiwork that they beheld. They took a sort of Arabian Nights' view of the whole concern, and talked of Solomon and the giants before the Flood, in connection with this wonderful head.

Digging further established the fact that it was a winged lion that was thus unearthed, and that its fellow was not far off; for the post of these mysterious winged creatures in Assyrian palaces was to guard, in pairs, the portals of the royal palace. The sculpture of these winged lions was artistic and beautiful. The form seems instinct with a calm, easy vigour. Only look at the long sweep of the expanded wings; what outline could be more graceful! The sinewy figure stands well on its legs, of which, like all the other Assyrian winged lions and bulls, it has five—an astounding liberality in the matter of legs—so

WINGED HUMAN-HEADED LION.



that whether viewed in front or from the side, it appeared a perfect whole. Such an artistic notion amuses us; and, indeed, it does not seem in keeping with the amount of art-knowledge and execution which these remains prove the Assyrians to have possessed. Round the body of this beast is an ornamented tasseled band or girdle; why, we do not know, as there is no other bit of human attire or trappings about it. Possibly it is something sacred and symbolic. By way of economizing labour, the figures are partly in relief, partly in the round; the fore-part standing out, the rest of the body in relief, against the wall which formed the entrance to the apartment. The back of the slab was, as usual, covered with arrow-headed inscriptions.

Room after room of this now under-ground palace, the North-west Palace, was by degrees cleared out, so as to give some general idea of the plan of the building. Among the slabs thus discovered were



SACRED TREE, AND KNEELING FIGURES.

various groupings of figures, sacred and divine, with a floral object which has been called the sacred tree, and

is supposed to have been peculiarly connected with the worship of Asshur, the special divinity of the country. On one of these, two winged human figures in long tunics, and wearing two-horned round caps, kneel, one on each side of the sacred emblem, with the hands, one raised, the other extended, as if in the performance of some religious rite connected with the tree, of whose mystic significance various conjectures have been offered, but none decidedly made out. Some antiquaries think that it points towards the Tree of Life of our own Scriptures. And that may be true, for some of the very early recorded facts in the Bible—the Deluge is one of them—are met with under various disguises in the religious belief of many uncivilized, or half-civilized nations. Another slab represents the tree flanked by two of the eagle-headed figures, which it has been agreed to



SACRED TREE, AND NISROCH.

call Nisroch, in whose extended hands are seen the pine, or fir-cone, and sacred basket.



CHAPTER IV.

NIMRUD.

SPRING, which is very lovely in Mesopotamia, as where is it not? had now given way to summer, and summer brought with it increased facilities for exploration, so far as the cessation of official hindrance went. The new governor was a gentleman, and had more sense than his predecessors, so there was no difficulty with him. For form's sake he appointed a Turkish officer to be present at the scene of action, and thus benefited the explorer by publicly sanctioning the whole concern. There might be treasure, as some of them would have it, or there might not; but it was all the same, Mr. Layard was not to be meddled with. So with a small number of skilful workmen, operations were resumed at Nimrúd.

But the intense heat—sometimes in the trenches the thermometer rose to 115° —and the storms of blinding dust into which the sweet green of the flower-enamelled plain had been converted, and that from time to time enveloped them, were something to marvel at, and made work out there a trying thing. On one occasion, Mr. Layard returning home, found

no home to receive him; it had been blown away bodily, heavy timber and all, off the bank overhanging the river upon which it had been situated! Wind and storm, however, and horrible insects, did not stop work; and new treasures were continually turned up in the form of sculptured slabs lining the walls of the different chambers explored, precisely in the way in which they now, after their long interment, line the walls of the gallery, where they are shown, in the British Museum.

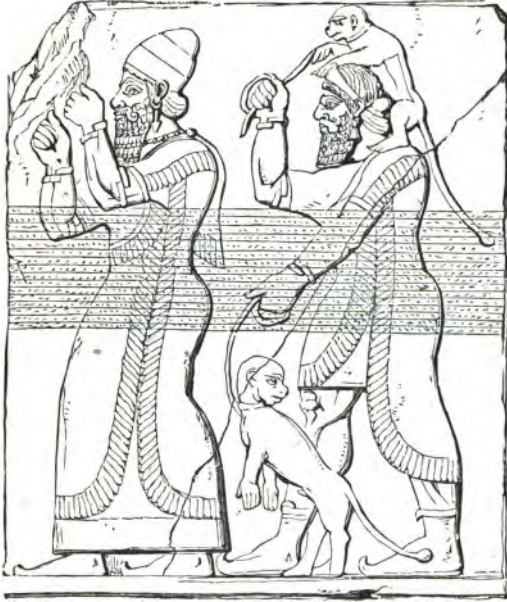
On one of these slabs was sculptured, eight feet high, a figure of the king, richly attired, accompanied by his usual beardless attendant, and one who, from his position and attitude, it was decided must be his chief minister, or visir, as he is called in the East.

The costume of this high official is sometimes found to be more magnificent than even that of his master. By the way, an English footman, in his gold lace and aiguillettes, so far as splendour of dress goes, far outdoes "my lord," behind whose carriage he stands. But to go back to the visir, his dress consists of the usual long robe worn by the great, embroidered round the neck, the sleeves, which are short, not reaching to the elbow, and the hem. This is bound round the waist by a broad band, or by a deep fringe wound slanting about the figure, and falling as low as the knees. With this latter is worn a shoulder-belt from left to right. Something like the bandeau of a modern lady is worn upon the head; and from the back of this hang, as low as the waist, two bands with ornamented ends. Of course, he has armlets, bracelets, and those wretched ear-rings.

Certain articles of dress are worn alone by himself and the sovereign. One of these is a very odd-looking article: a short, embroidered, fringed bit of costume that one would call an apron, only that it is put on wrong side before,—that is, on his worship's back, instead of in front. When conjoined in sculpture with the king, the visir usually stands either with hands folded easily, and raised as high as the waist, or with right hand raised, as if speaking earnestly, and the left resting upon the hilt of the short sword which hangs by his side.

Other slabs now found presented figures who appeared from their features and costume to be foreigners, possibly bringing tribute to their Assyrian masters. Among the offerings brought are what Solomon was at the pains of importing from a far country, namely apes. One of the figures in the cut of this slab, which we give, is predominating over a couple of comical-looking, long-tailed beasts who must be monkeys; albeit the upper little wretch has a most frog-like, or rather tadpole-like figure. One of the creatures, little Tadpole, sits on the man's shoulders, holding on with one hand by his head-dress, with the other by a cord which is held twisted round the hand of the latter; the other very agreeable-faced little monkey on the ground is secured by the man's left hand. A most human-looking little beast it is. We have seen real human beings with worse countenances both as to outline and expression. For a monkey it is really handsome; monkeys do as a rule "caricature humanity so abominably." The first figure, though at a casual glance looking

Assyrian enough, has yet a different class of face, more African, or snub-looking. His dress, also, as well



MEN AND MONKEYS.

as that of his neighbour, is in reality not a genuine Assyrian one. The cap and fillet worn by these two are not those of the Assyrians; while in place of the sandal of that people we see here a boot rather violently turned up at the toes, after the Turkish fashion. Were they Moors? It is said there were remains of black colour upon the faces; but it is not

known whether that had been put there on purpose, or had only been washed down accidentally from the hair, which had been thus painted, and that certainly looks Assyrian enough in the manner of its dressing.

More digging through chambers whose lining of carved slabs had fallen in and been broken by the fall, otherwise they were uninjured by the centuries upon centuries that had rolled over them. Time's triumphs are sometimes wrested from him; and it must have felt like gazing upon relics of the days before the Flood, to look thus upon the handiwork of those who had been reduced to indistinguishable dust for more than two thousand years. A smashed, winged bull next presented itself, whose head having been knocked off uninjured, was preserved to be sent to England. Under its body were sixteen little copper lions with rings fastened to them, apparently designed for a series of graduated weights; the largest was a foot long, the smallest an inch. They were brought away as being curious, but ultimately proved important, as the characters impressed upon them, when at last made out, were found to supply the names of several Assyrian monarchs, as well as the name and amount of each weight. Then, after a winged human figure, with the usual rosetted band round the head, and the five-flowered branch and sacred basket in his hands, came a series of slabs in good preservation, whose sculpture presented some new features, illustrating Assyrian customs and doings. One of them gave a castle or fortified building, surrounded by what was evidently intended for water; not a moat, still and stagnant, but a sea, or

pretty brisk river, judging from the curled lines that were intended to stand for waves. On the first



FORTRESS ON ISLAND.

tower stood a man, bow in one hand, arrow in the other; a very conventional man, indeed, seeing that if he were pushed down piston-wise into the tower—a proceeding suggested by his relation to it—he would completely fill it. As it is, he presents a lively image of Gulliver in the marrow bone. Two other figures, equally disproportioned to the towers, from whose upper part they issue, are designed for women, in an attitude of supplication towards the attacking party, represented by two conical-capped soldiers, who, each kneeling on one knee, are discharging their arrows towards the fort. Three well-clad figures, whose long robes show them to be of some importance, are swimming through the stream to the castle—it is supposed fleeing from the enemy. Two of them are supported by inflated skins, which in the sculpture, not our cut of it, so completely retain the shape of the animals from which they have been stripped as to have rather a droll effect; the men look as if they were hugging the

creatures themselves. The third, poor fellow, has nothing to float him, and he is wounded by the archers on the shore, so that his chance of rejoining his friends in the fort seems exceedingly slender. These wall-slabs, like all the others, were divided by arrow-headed inscriptions, understood to be descriptive of the scenes represented. In some of those brought to England these inscriptions have been preserved, others have had them cut off, either to lighten their carriage here, or, as in those evidently brought from a previous building, to make them fit into their new place.

Another slab showed a battering ram and movable tower, such as in the middle ages were used in Europe, brought up to the siege of a city; a successful one, apparently, as the next lower one exhibited a scene of prisoners brought before the monarch by his chief minister. Hunting scenes—lions and bulls, the quarry—of which we shall have more to say presently, followed, that of the lion being of rare excellence, at least Assyrian excellence, as a work of art.

The researches at Nimrúd were here interrupted for a short time, in order to test the capabilities of the great mound at Kouyunjik, opposite Mosul, for yielding its stores, always supposing that it had any. But the examination, carried on both by Mr. Layard and by the French consul (not Botta), in different parts of it, was not very satisfactory. Sufficient remains were, however, dug up to convince the former that, though a palace was, without doubt, buried there, it was of later date than the one at Nimrúd, to which he therefore at once returned.

His researches were now made with the help of thirty workmen, chiefly Arabs, whose delight in his success grew to be nearly as great as that of their employer, though it was expressed in somewhat of a different fashion—by bounding about, with their long hair flying in the wind, to the music of their own war-cry. Among the objects secured were a four-winged human figure holding a mace; then a royal personage, between eagle-headed divinities, and wearing round his neck a strange assemblage of objects, which, from the connection in which they make their appearance, are supposed to have a symbolical meaning. These symbolical ornaments consist of a representation of the sun, of a star, of a sort of fork—sometimes with two, sometimes with three prongs—and of the sacred three-horned cap. One would like to know the precise meaning of this horned cap, if it has one; but there do not, as yet, seem to be any conjectures concerning it on the part of the learned.

One of the chambers now entered contained sculpture of unusual size and excellence. Upon one large slab was a group of the king and his attendants. The king is seated upon a highly ornamented stool, or throne, with bulls' heads at the corners; his sandaled feet are supported on a footstool, standing upon lions' claws. In his raised right hand he holds a shallow bowl; his left hand is laid quietly upon his knee. The royal robes are of unusual richness, profusely ornamented with embroidery representing men and animals engaged in combat, griffins, the sacred tree, and even the king himself, in the performance

of religious offices. The bracelets, armlets, and earrings are to match—a sort of holiday costume.



KING SEATED ON THRONE,

Behind him stands the usual beardless attendant, also in rich robes, which, like those of his master and the other figures, have a deep border of embroidery, similar to that worn by the king. Some of the designs for these embroideries are extremely grotesque. Wild bulls, done to death in the hunt,

tumble down on their noses, with their tails sticking straight up in the air, erect as ramrods. Other



WITH ATTENDANTS.

beasts are purposely placed in ludicrous positions. Or you may see an eagle-headed divinity, or good genius, whichever he may be, seizing a reverend, winged, horn-capped lion by the tail, for the greater facility of giving him a precious good beating, with a formidable club raised high in air, preparatory to

its sounding descent on said lion's most defenceless region. The blank look of wide-open-eyed astonishment which the creature, thus held by the tail that he may be the more conveniently whipped from behind, turns round on his aggressor, is inimitable. Words could not more plainly express—Do you really mean it?

The attendant on this slab holds a fly-flap, or whisk, over the sovereign's head; in his left hand is a stringed bow, the quiver hangs by his side; and a short, straight sword is thrust into his belt. The fly-flap, or fan, in the earlier periods, to which this sculpture belongs, is made of what appears to be horse-hair, fixed in a short handle, generally ending in a ram's head, or that of some other animal. At a later date long graceful feathers replaced the horse-hair. In front of the king another beardless attendant is seen, extending a second fly-flap, so as to keep their lord clear of buzzing plagues both fore and aft. His left hand grasps the handle of what is conjectured to be the cover of the bowl in the king's hand: this handle is ornamented with birds' heads. Over his left shoulder is thrown a long fringed cloth, such as is still thus used in the East, to present to any distinguished personage after drinking or washing. Behind this attendant stands the usual sacred figure, with three-horned cap, fir-cone, and basket, upon which is sculptured the sacred tree, having figures on each side of it, with the winged circle, Asshur, or whatever it may be, poised above them. This good genius wears ear-rings of enormous size.

At this juncture Mr. Layard determined on secur-

ing what he had already, with so much labour, gained. The transport of such uncommonly heavy goods—masses of stone—was not easy in that out-of-the-way place; so the huge lions and immense slabs were perforce immovable for the present: for the rest, it was thought a small English steamer, that was hovering about on the Tigris, might suffice. But she could not be got up, as something was amiss with the machinery, so that native resources had to be relied upon. In order to render the removal easier, the blocks of sculptured stone were, in the first place, reduced in weight by cutting away some of the often-repeated inscriptions; then they were sawn thinner at the back; afterwards, enveloped in matting and soft cloths, to preserve the sculpture from injury, they were fixed securely in wooden cases. These were carried on bullock-carts to the river, where, placed on a raft, made in the country fashion, of barks of timber, buoyed up by inflated skins, they sailed calmly down to Baghdád, whence they were boated to Busrah—that is, Bassora—a port on the conjoined Euphrates and Tigris. Finally, by way of Bombay, they were duly conveyed to our own shores. Duly: it cannot be said safely; for when they arrived, it was found that the matting had left its impress on some of the marbles; while exposure to the weather, on the strand at Bombay, where they had been heedlessly left, had inflicted more injury on these old-world relics than had done more than two thousand years of oblivion underneath the vast dust-heaps of the East.

The packing and sending off of these sculptures

created great interest in the neighbourhood. From the highest to the lowest, all were astir. The pasha, who came in state, great guns and all, to visit Mr. Layard in his very extraordinary work-shop, was puzzled; various conjectures as to what they were, and what was to be done with them, were offered by his followers, ending with the idea—not a bad one, had it been correct—that the lions were to flank the entrance to the Queen's palace, as, thousands of years before, they had kept guard at the portals of Assyrian Monarchs. The whole was rather amusingly summed up in a hearty malediction on all "infidels and their works," pronounced by no less a personage than the *cadi* himself, who rejoiced in thinking that the superior skill of such, in this world, was permitted them by Providence for the purpose of inflicting upon them a superior amount of punishment in the next! People have odd ways of comforting themselves when things, as they think, go wrong; but surely the *cadi's* was the oddest way of all.

Before proceeding with further details of excavations, and their results, it may be interesting to have a look at the arrangements and daily life of the working party, increased as it was by the liberality of the trustees of the British Museum, whose grant, though very inadequate to so costly an undertaking, still enabled Mr. Layard to prosecute his labours more extensively than before.

In the first place, a number of Arabs being enlisted to carry away the loosened earth in baskets (digging it up was not their forte), set up their black goats'-hair tents close at hand. The more stalwart Chal-

deans undertook the laborious work of handling the pick-axe; for the excessive hardness of the soil rendered the spade of little use, save for the purpose of filling the baskets of their weaker brethren. These men were Christians of what is called the Nestorian Church in the East; and both Chaldeans and Arabs brought their wives and children with them. A few artisans completed the party, of whom Mr. Layard had to be head superintendent, doing everything himself that others could not do; such as directing their plans, making drawings or castings of sculptures and inscriptions, keeping a sharp eye on the diggers, lest, in their ignorant zeal, they should do mischief—he was frequently obliged to handle the pick himself, to prevent its being sent right into some delicate carving—and finally, looking after the packing of the precious relics.

"Hic labor, hoc opus est," which boys fresh from school may freely translate, "Here's a pretty piece of business!" And so it was. Had Mr. Layard been like Cerberus, "three gentlemen at once," there would have been quite enough for him to do.

But the labourers had to be housed. A residence, built of mud bricks, was therefore speedily run up, roofed with wood and branches of trees, over which was a layer of mud to keep out the rain, for winter was now rapidly coming on. It is wonderful what a useful thing mud is—in its place. This was for the commandant and his servants. The Nestorians were provided for by a similar erection on the mound, while a small one was raised for the immediate safety of such remains as were portable enough to tempt

pickers and stealers—rather plentiful out there. Tents innumerable accommodated the Arabs. The workmen were divided into sets of eight or ten Arabs, to two or four Nestorians; Mr. Layard astutely mixing up with his Arabs a few belonging to unfriendly tribes, by way of having some perfectly ready to give information if the mass attempted to cheat him.

The Arabs took their mid-day meal in the trenches where they were at work. This consisted of a porridge made of millet—millet is a small, coarse grain, which in Southern Europe, where it is grown as well as in the East, is chiefly used for feeding animals—or a loaf of the same, with perchance curdled milk to savour it. For variety there might be a lenten dish of herbs, simply flavoured with salt. This poor fare—poor compared with what English excavators get—would be brought from the tents, where it was prepared, by their little ones, who would sit amid the sculptures and dust, staring with round eyes at the wonders before them, waiting to take back the empty vessels. Water washed down the frugal, yet cheerful meal, which sometimes was rendered festal by a donkey-load of fruit, dates or raisins, bought from some passing dealer by their kind-hearted employer, who in return was occasionally invited to “eat bread”—literally—with the addition of a morsel of butter or a little fruit, with his humble friends. On such occasions the honours of their meagre entertainment were done with all respect and decorum. On Sundays, and Church festival days, the Nestorians, among whom were several of their native clergy, joined in divine ser-

vice, kneeling devoutly, with uncovered heads, as prayer or chant arose from amid the stupendous remains of ancient heathenism which their work-day toil had unearthed.

Mr. Layard was magistrate, as well as superintendent workman, having provided himself with handcuffs, and other emollients, for the purpose. It was of absolute necessity that he thus took the law into his own hands, seeing there was no one else to wield it; and the prompt settlement of quarrels and other wrong-doings was most satisfactory to all parties, particularly to the poor women of the settlement, whose Arab husbands soon found that, under Mr. Layard's auspices, beating their wives was a luxury that they had better dispense with. "Small profits and quick returns," might well have been the motto of each offender among them, as one wishes it might be all the world over.

The Arabs worked well; but the regular discipline and daily labour, in place of their usual wild life, at times went sorely against the grain. "It was not," they said, "for a man to carry about dirt in baskets, and to use a spade all his life." "An Arab was an Arab;" and they did not like it. So, to relieve their feelings, they made believe to capture a flock of sheep which one of the shepherds of the village was leisurely driving home—frightening him almost out of his senses, as he saw his charge fleeing in all directions before the wild war-cries and brandished weapons of these work-wearied sons of the desert! It might be a very good joke, but *he* certainly did not think it "worth repeating."



CHAPTER V.

MORE DIGGING AT NIMRUD.

WITH improved means and organization, work went on briskly in several places at once, including the south-east corner of the mound, wherein as yet no trace of buildings had presented itself. And its fruits were among the most gratifying hitherto obtained. In addition to what may be called odds and ends—mouldering armour, small vases of glass and alabaster, and a large vase, beautifully coloured by Time, which one of those careless strong Nestorians broke with his pick—in addition to these kinds of things, a series of slabs, bearing warlike incidents vividly portrayed upon them, were discovered, which we shall describe and figure in a future chapter on Assyrian life. Further, one trench of good fifty yards' digging amid the ruins of the central palace, that was just on the point of being abandoned as unprofitable, suddenly rewarded them with one of their most important acquisitions. This was an obelisk of black marble, about six feet six inches high, covered, for about three-fourths of its height, with inscriptions and sculptured bas-reliefs. The bas-reliefs were

twenty in number, placed in five rows, one above the other, with a line of inscription between each. They displayed the king with his usual attendants, the visir and the beardless officials; a prisoner was at the feet of the monarch; advancing towards him was a procession of men leading all sorts of animals, including an elephant, rhinoceros, camel, and plenty of monkeys, and bearing in their hands rich offerings in tribute: the whole, it was supposed, intended to commemorate some great conquest by the king whose name was inscribed upon the obelisk.

The joint labours of Sir Henry Rawlinson and Dr. Hincks, ultimately interpreted the inscriptions as relating to the reign of a monarch named Selima Rish, son and successor to Sardanapalus the Great, otherwise Asshur-izir-pal, who ascended the throne nine centuries before the birth of our Lord. The offerings were from tributary monarchs, among whose names appear that of Jehu, the furious-driving King of Israel, and Hazael of Syria: he who, when warned by Elisha the prophet of the iniquities of which he would be ultimately guilty, replied, indignantly,—“But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” and then went straight home to begin his career of crime by murdering his sovereign, as he lay in all the helplessness of his sick-bed. In this, however, and all other instances, it must be borne in mind that Assyrian history and chronology (that is, system of dates), as made out from these long not understood arrow-heads, are still somewhat doubtful; and, subject to this doubtfulness, we must therefore for the present receive their

interpretation. We cannot wonder at this: a dead language always presents difficulties of its own; and that of Assyria has not only been dead, but dead and buried—literally—for ages. On this obelisk camels are poetically and graphically described as “beasts of the desert, with the double back.”

It was ascertained that this particular palace, upon which they were now at work, had been erected about the beginning of the seventh century before the birth of Christ, by Esar-haddon, the son of Sennacherib, and was the latest in date of the Assyrian royal residences. It had been constructed of the old materials of former palaces: that was the Assyrian custom, just as, according to children's saying, the old moons are cut up to make new ones.

So important was the obelisk deemed, that, after copying both writing and carvings upon it, it was at once packed up for transit, and confided to the special care of a party of trustworthy Arabs, who were appointed to keep watch over it, both by day and night, until it could be got safely afloat. In about six weeks, spoil enough—the spoil of old Time—was collected to furnish another cargo for England; and a raft being constructed as before, was loaded and sent off to Baghdád.

During this six weeks' excavation some curious earthenware coffins were discovered: *sarcophagi* they are called,—a word formed from two Greek ones signifying *flesh*, and *to devour* or *eat*. The name is said to have been first given to coffins formed of a certain species of stone—Assos stone—which was supposed to have the property of destroying the

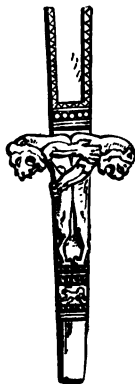
form enclosed by it: from this it was applied to stone coffins in general, and hence to those made of baked clay. Some of these sarcophagi found subsequently by Mr. Loftus at Warka, an ancient Babylonian site, look amazingly like slipper baths.

Christmas now intervened, and was kept at Mosul, where there were other Christians, native as well as foreign, like our explorer. Operations were afterwards resumed at Nimrūd, chiefly in the North-west Palace, the most ancient and productive of the ruins. Three months' work here caused the entire result to be, that of this under-ground palace twenty-eight rooms had been cleared out and examined, all more or less lined with sculptured slabs of the nature of those already described. Colossal-winged figures, eagle-headed divinities, warlike scenes, hunting pieces, religious ceremonies, made up the staple of them. Winged bulls and lions of course "turned up" wherever it was possible for them to do so. One remarkably fine bas-relief was now met with of the king by whom the palace was built—Asshur-izir-pal, according to Sir Henry Rawlinson's reading of his Assyrian name, the Sardanapalus the Great of the Greek historians, from whom what little we knew of Assyrian matters previous to these discoveries was chiefly obtained. He is dressed in the ordinary rich royal robes, with armlets, bracelets, and immense ear-rings. It must be remarked that in the sculpture itself the face has a less pleasing expression than that given to it in the cut; the under jaw projects more, monkey fashion. The eyes and sandals show traces of colour, which it is believed



KING ASSHUR-IZIR-PAL. (North-west Palace, Nimrud.)

was not usually employed in sculpture, save at times on the eyes, hair, lips, sandals, and equipments. The right hand rests upon a tall staff, the left is gently drooped upon the hilt of his sword. The scabbard was often highly ornamented; in this instance its point is decorated with grotesque lions wrestling with each other, as more clearly shown in the cut of it. There is great vigour in this little bit of design. The lions are sinewy and life-like, looking as if it were highly probable that they would tear each other to pieces: it is evident that they are doing their best that way. These wrestling lions were a favourite ornament for the scabbards of swords.



ORNAMENT OF ROYAL
SCABBARD.

Throughout it is to be noticed that the entrances to the chambers were guarded by winged lions and bulls, the fore part usually in "the round," the remainder of the body in relief only—standing out from the wall that formed the entrance. To give an idea of the arrangement of these rooms and passages would of course be impossible without a plan of them: out of one into another, on and on, is their general system.

In some of these rooms beautiful ivory carvings were discovered, but so frail from age, and so firmly adhering to the surrounding rubbish, that it was a work of no small patience to extract them with

gentle touches of a pen-knife. This delicate little bit of work of course fell to Mr. Layard's share, lying on the ground to accommodate himself to his circumstances. Some of the carvings were in relief on small slabs, which had apparently been affixed to articles of furniture; somewhat like our inlaying, it is to be supposed. Gilding had been occasionally used; blue or green glass, or some kind of composition, was also found inserted in the work. Other specimens presented the entire object: stags—the slim, startled look of the animal is admirably given in one of the fragments rescued—lions, bulls, and detached portions of statuettes of the human figure, delicately sculptured. Modern science has found out many wonderful things, and not the least wonderful is that of restoring these crumbling, decayed, thousands of years' old ivories, to their original compactness and capability of being handled without dropping to pieces. This, we believe, is accomplished by saturating them with some liquid which has the property of restoring the adhesiveness that their particles had lost.

Painted chambers were also opened up, in the course of these explorations; but, on exposure to the air, the plaster on which the designs had been drawn and coloured fell off into utter destruction. The designs were similar in their character to those of the sculptured slabs. Blue, red, white, yellow, and black were the colours used. Small earthenware articles, cups, vases, and the like, of a reddish clay, were also met with. The entrance to one of the sculpture-lined rooms was flanked, not by lions and

bulls, but by gigantic winged figures, one on each side, very similar to some already described, but holding on one arm a small wild goat; in the other hand, erect, an ear of wheat, which in that once rich and fertile country grew to an unusual size. It is conjectured that this figure, like the one with a fallow-deer, with whose general appearance it is identical, represents the bringing sacrificial offerings, perhaps by a priest. The wild goat, or ibex, native to the craggy wilds of Kurdistan, is supposed to have been a sacred animal among the Assyrians.

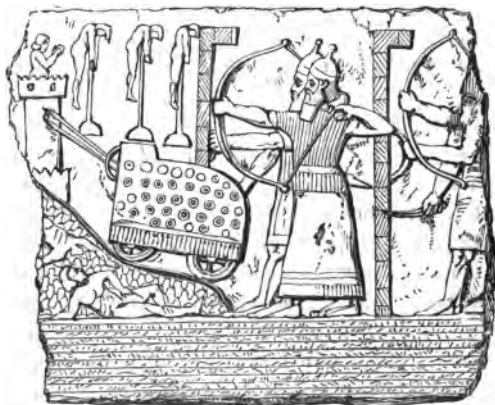
In digging down into the southern portion of the central ruin, some strange discoveries were made. A number of tombs were disclosed, with crumbling skeletons, fragments of ornaments, vases, and such other articles contained in them as had been previously found in Egyptian tombs, where cherished objects, as if hardly parted with, were wont to be placed by the side of their passive occupants. Digging right down, five feet beneath these, they came upon remains of building—the usual walls of sun-dried clay bricks, from which, as it appeared, the sculptures had been removed, and left lying about, as if to be carried off elsewhere, according to Assyrian custom, for another palace. A circumstance of this kind enables one, to some extent, to realize the vast antiquity of these buried monuments: a king's palace deserted so long that the very earth above it had become a place of tombs, these tombs themselves so long engulfed that it is, as yet, impossible to say to what extinct people their dead belonged!

The sculpture on these slabs was chiefly of a war-



FIGURE, WITH IBEX, OR MOUNTAIN GOAT.

like character; and from the date-palms and camels pictured on them they were conjectured to record some Arabian conquest. One of them represents the siege of a city, against whose walls a battering-ram has been drawn up. In this particular engine there are two rams instead of one, and in place of their



FRAGMENT ILLUSTRATING THE USE OF THE BATTERING-RAM.

beams being hammer-headed—to deal a smashing blow—they terminate in spear-heads, to poke desperate holes in the walls. Some of these machines, which were much used by the Assyrians, were stationary, others, like the one in our cut, moved upon wheels. They were covered with wicker-work, felt, or hides; the first not the safest, as the ordinary mode of repelling a battering-ram was to try to set it on fire by throwing combustibles of various kinds upon it, and wicker-work is soon ablaze.

This assault by fire was sought to be warded off by throwing water, with which those who worked the machine were provided for the purpose, upon the burning tow, or other fiery projectile, whence came the danger. Or, as prevention is better than cure, a screen of hides, or other material of the kind, was hung up in front of the engine. Another way of neutralizing the battering-ram was for the besieged to hang a loop of stout chain from the top of the wall; this caught the head of the ram in its descent and bore off the weight of its shock. Two, however, can always play at any such game, and in return the assailants grappled the chain with strong iron hooks at the extremity of poles, threw their whole weight at the other end, and so dragged it out of the way. A mound of earth, or earth and stones, as in the cut, was occasionally raised, up which the machine was thrust to bring it on a level with the top of the fortifications attacked. It was in allusion to this custom that, when all Jerusalem was quaking for fear of King Sennacherib and his Assyrians, God comforted His own people by assuring them that the insolent invader should not "cast a bank against it," but should retire discomfited to his own country, and to the dismal fate that there awaited him at the hands of his own sons.

The archers in this sculpture are protected, as was the custom, by huge wicker shields, capable of covering a man from head to foot; the shield was held in its place by a comrade, as our own middle-age archer was protected by a shield-bearer, with his *pavise*, as this shield was called. The projecting

upper part, sometimes simply curved, saved him who was behind the shield from ugly knocks on the head by stones thrown from the walls. The figure on the tower with raised hands is apparently asking mercy: the poor wretches gibbeted in the distance give a fearful idea of the sort of mercy likely to be dealt out to them. Some of the slain lie in the foreground.

There is a peculiarity in the cut which we must point out and explain, as it otherwise might be thought the fault of the draughtsman; that is, the bow-string appears to pass around the archer's head. This is strictly Assyrian art; the possibilities of a bow-string were nothing to them, but it was a canon of art that nought should interfere with their representation of the "human face divine."

Another of these slabs represents a scene at the close of a successful siege, when battering-ram, and catapult, and fierce attacks from spearmen, who tear the walls to pieces with their sharp, strong points, have done their work. The conquerors are seizing the cattle, sheep and oxen, of their fallen enemies, of which officials are taking an account, writing upon pendent slips of something that curves like a roll of paper or leather: it is not known what material the Assyrians used for this purpose. Two carts drawn by bullocks, and each having in it two women and a child, with their scanty possessions tied up in bags, are being driven off to, nobody knows what fate, at the hands of their Assyrian masters. It is said these people were less cruel to their women captives than to the men who fell into their power. That, if true,

is an item of civilization on their part. Two battering-rams are seen near the walls.

Another slab shows a figure which, judging by the head-dress, is that of a woman, with four camels



FIGURE WITH CAMELS.

following her. The camels are well drawn, but the surface of the sculpture is much injured. Indeed the stone of which the majority of Assyrian sculptures consist is so soft, and so liable to detriment from even such slight causes as being long infolded in matting through which water has dripped, that the marvel is, not that some are so much, but that they are so little injured. Some of the packages lay soaking in wet on the strand at Bombay, and (in consequence) in addition to the original Assyrian design, bore the very common-place one of an impress of the matting in which they had been wrapped.

Upon the close of his labours at this spot, Mr. Layard paid a visit to Kalah Sherghât. But the

fruit of his excavations there was little more than that we have already referred to and figured—the mutilated, sitting figure of black basalt—the *stump* of some mighty monarch of those far off times; so far off that it seems to try one's mental eyes even to attempt to peer at them across the illimitable distance. He accordingly soon returned to Nimrúd, preparatory to removing his large sculptures, and again drawing the veil of earth and rubbish over what was, of necessity, left behind. These were his instructions from home, for it was the only way of preserving them from being injured either by irreverent Arabs and Mussulmans, or by the action of the quick-corroding atmosphere on the crumbling limestone, of which, as we have said, Assyrian monuments are chiefly sculptured.





CHAPTER VI.

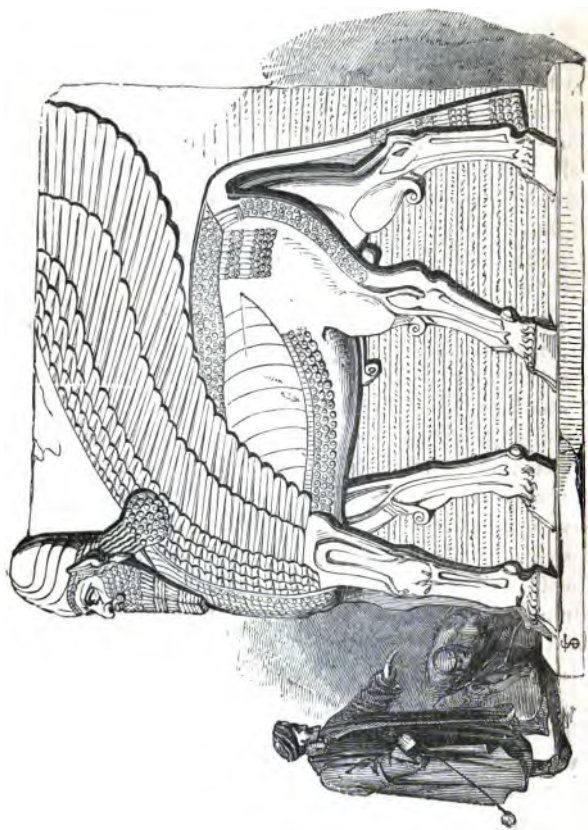
PACKING-UP.

WORK at Nimrūd was now ended. The yelling, capering Arabs, flourishing their baskets over their heads, after discharging the dusty contents, were to return to their old Eastern occupations of roving the desert, smoking their pipes, and doing nothing, while their poor womankind were moiling in all the drudgery of domestic life in those uncivilized regions. The Nestorians, strong and sturdy, were to seek out employment for their picks, or remain in idleness, elsewhere than under the auspices of the indefatigable, inscrutable Englishman, whose use for the lumbering old stones that he carried off with him was the puzzle of all Mosul, not to mention the surrounding neighbourhood. All was to be changed: lean-bodied, wiry, swarthy plunderers, on camels or fleet horses, were again to make the site of the buried cities unsafe for the traveller. It was time to pack up and be gone.

But it was difficult to pack up, still more so to be gone. Huge lions and bulls, with wings, cannot go into a man's carpet bag. Thirteen pairs of these in good preservation had been discovered, with others

knocked to pieces. The larger ones there were, at this time, no means of removing, but it was resolved to attempt carrying off a specimen of each of a smaller size. A winged bull was therefore selected. In the cut he is fierce-looking enough, more so, indeed, than in the sculpture, where he has a very placable expression—venerable, yet mild, a sort of old gentlemanly bull. One of the lions brought from Nimrúd, the result of later explorations, is absolutely enough to frighten one: his mouth is so very wide open that it looks not only as if you might jump into it, but could not well help doing so.

To remove even this smaller bull a waggon had to be constructed on purpose, and as none but soft wood grew in the immediate neighbourhood, harder timber had to be sent for to the hills—balks of it to construct the framework of the waggon, cross cuts of its trunk to form the wheels. In due time this arrived. Orientals are not quite so quick in transacting business as we are; indeed they have an extraordinary proverb to the effect that "haste comes from the devil!" The various parts were then put together, strengthened by iron, and the whole so fitted that men as well as buffaloes, the ordinary beasts of draught, might drag it along. When it was completed it was a world's wonder to the people of Mosul. The crowds that came to look at it, and the utter astonishment of those crowds, are difficult to describe. Some stared in simple wonderment; others, the more conceited, pretended to know all about it, and were good enough to explain its marvels to their gaping neighbours. It was wonderful, standing still there



WINGED HUMAN-HEADED BULL.

to be stared at by high and low, but more wonderful still was it when at length, by dint of a team of buffaloes, Arabs, and Chaldæans, it rumbled over the shaky bridge of boats out of Mosul, on its way to Nimrúd to receive the precious cargo awaiting its arrival there.

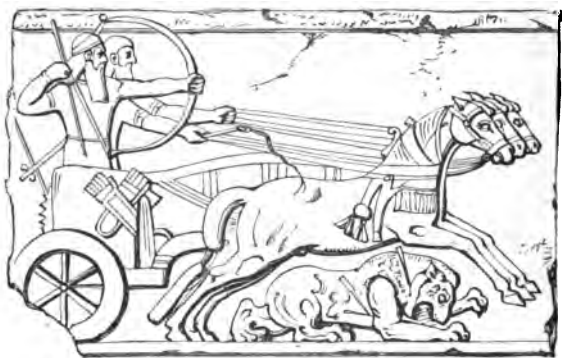
“Crack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad!”

It was a great thing to get the waggon to its freight, but, alas! the bull itself, ponderous as it was, and with no wheels to help it, had to make advances also, which, notwithstanding its five legs—poor helpless supporters on such an occasion—it accomplished with extreme difficulty.

To facilitate its movement it was lessened in bulk as much as possible by cutting away the unsculptured part. Then fifty Arabs and Nestorians, among them, removed the earth between the bull and the waggon, so as to make a plain track to the latter. A spirited lion-hunt, of which we give a cut, was unearthed in the process and laid aside, also for removal. Ropes to pull and haul at were essentials less easily supplied in that distant land than they would be here. Something of the sort was however obtained, and at length all was in readiness for the hit or miss of this novel transit.

How shall we describe the complicated arrangement of ropes and blocks, and greased beams of timber, with all the *et cæteras* of pullage and haulage that were brought to bear upon the huge masses about to cross the sea? Better leave them undescribed, and relate the results of their judicious

combination. High on the mound stood Mr. Layard to direct operations, and the kicking, shouting Arabs,



CHIEFTAIN IN CHARIOT, LION HUNTING.

and Nestorians, and buffaloes, attached to the ropes. They did their best; but it was zeal without knowledge, spite of the bricks, and clods, and other missiles with which Mr. Layard sought to direct their proceedings, supplemented by the resounding hide whips of his Turkish officials, liberally laid on wherever they were thought likely to be of service. They took his instructions in good part, even the "brick bats" and whips, for they were nearly as anxious as himself for the success of the undertaking; so with infinite labour, the bull, enveloped in mats and woollens, was at length fairly placed alongside the waggon. That was work enough for one day. Mutton and dancing, two favourite Arabian refreshments, concluded the day; for indeed these wild

children of the desert at times "dance like mad." Next morning the bull being hoisted on the waggon, and secured there on its side, about three hundred men were harnessed to the vehicle, and it moved slowly along in grand procession, Mr. Layard and one of his friends mounted in front to direct the march, musicians preceding to encourage the men, who were pulling with might and main until they were nearly flat on the ground, screaming themselves hoarse at the same time. Groups of admiring Arabs stood around, while the women of the encampment set up their sweet voices in the rear.

This was all very well, until two of the waggon wheels went pop into an empty corn-pit, which, according to the custom of the country, after its contents had been removed, was covered over with branches of trees and the like, so as to form an excellent trap. They could not be got out at the time; so the load was left where it was, sustaining no other damage in the course of the night than that of being shot at by some wandering Arabs, who thus made their mark in the soft limestone of the winged bull. Next day the wheels were extricated, and in company of the lion, which was got down with less trouble, the bull was safely lodged at the river-side, to be taken by raft to Busrah, on its way to England.

All this seems much ado for the moving of a mass of its size. But if we only look at the comparatively small blocks of stone travelling in solitary state in an English waggon, which, despite our well-made roads, requires two, four, or six horses to draw it, we shall the better understand how, where there

were no roads at all, the difficulties of transit should be almost insuperable.

The Assyrians themselves had their little difficulties in moving and setting up these big bulls and lions in their places, of which some of the sculptured slabs brought into daylight supply the details.

The huge block—it is a winged bull whose journey we are describing, with the help of a sculptured slab found at Kouyunjik—is cased in an open frame-work, something like the open-worked box called a *crate*, in which glass and earthenware are packed; but with fewer bars, and of course on a very much larger and stronger scale. This is mounted upon a boat-shaped vehicle without wheels; the frame-work and its ponderous contents being steadied and kept from toppling over, by ropes affixed to its upper part, and by long staves with forked ends, with which three men on the side turned to the spectators are furnished. The ropes are held by four men; of course there is an equal number both of forked poles and ropes on the other side, to “keep the balance true.” To the vehicle itself four massive cables are attached, each pulled by a numerous gang of bare-legged labourers. From their bent figures you may see they are pulling with all their strength, their shoulder-belts, which are fastened to the cable, facilitating their doing so with less distress to themselves. In front are four men placing rollers beneath the sledge; behind is a huge lever, a beam of timber, worked scientifically by eight men, to push the load up the inclined plane, by means of which the Assyrians mounted their blocks on the elevated situations chosen for them—just as it

is supposed the enormous blocks of stone, of which the Pyramids are composed, were by the Egyptians raised from the level ground to the platform whence the building was to rise. One of the last two men at the lever will in another second receive a tremendous blow on his shoulders from a short thick truncheon, wielded by a well-armed official immediately in the rear, whose hand is raised in the act of striking. A man in an energetic attitude stands on the very prow of the sledge to direct movements. Two carts, each dragged by four men, carry great coils of spare cable, with other tackle strapped on the top of them; men with supplementary forked staves march in step on one side; while numerous labourers, admonished at intervals by the elevated cudgel, are seen in long file bearing their various implements. *Stick* appears to have been an institution among the Assyrians, as in this curious sculpture we count five cudgels to twenty-four labourers (rather a liberal supply), and each in the act of coming down upon the unfortunate next to it.

But to return to our own lion and bull. The land journey was not their only peril; there was the raft transit to Busrah (where they were to be shipped for Bombay), down the winding, inconstant Tigris; and this, over and above the real obstacles that presented themselves, had a host of imaginary ones raised against it, by the obstinate folly of the natives. What had not been done, never could be done;—that was their creed. Not such was Mr. Layard's. He wanted his packages got down to Busrah, and therefore would have it so, albeit raft had never before

performed the journey. Strong will prevailed—it generally does, so that it is important to see that it is also a good will—the raft was constructed, and, floated by six hundred skins of sheep or goats, was ready to receive its burden.

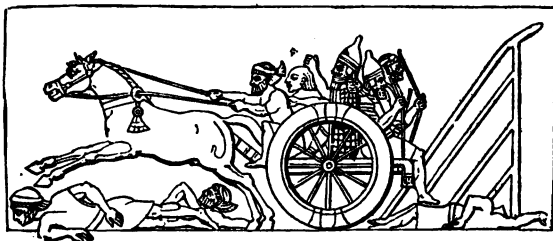
But though Oriental enough in their stupid objection to doing what had never been done before, when it was actually accomplished, the workmen showed intense civilization by “striking” for more wages, the moment the sculpture was ready to be paddled away on the raft! Had they been in Christian England they could not have displayed greater readiness to take advantage of what they thought the necessity of their employer; and by way of showing that they meant it, they immediately began packing up their goods and chattels as if to be gone. Inexorable Mr. Layard was not to be turned from his purpose even by this unpleasant demonstration, and the dispute was finally ended, as it ordinarily is in this country, by the “strikers” having to give way, and being themselves the sufferers from the contest. The raft was now loaded in peace—it was rather a delicate operation—and the unwearied explorer had the satisfaction of seeing it move slowly along down the river, until the winding of the stream hid it from his sight.

This cargo consisted not only of the smaller winged bull and lion, but of a quantity of miscellaneous sculpture. The large lions, now of necessity left behind, were removed during the course of Mr. Layard’s second visit to the ruins.

Mr. Layard took his leave of Nimrúd in the

month of May 1847. Something was to be done at Kouyunjik, but operations there were not at first very satisfactory. However, one day two Arab women presented themselves at Mosul (where he had fixed his quarters), still dripping from the river which they had hastily crossed on inflated skins—as the Assyrians, more than two thousand years before them, had done—to tell him that sculptures had at length been discovered. The French consul had dug and delved rather at random in this mound, and therefore found nothing. The women received the present, for the sake of which, as the bearers of good news, they had committed themselves on their blown-up sheep skins—like witches riding on a broomstick—to the waters of the Tigris, and Mr. Layard at once rode off to see what the thing really was. First a wall, forming the side of a room, then the inevitable winged bulls—in this instance with the poor equipment of four legs only—presented themselves, and in the course of a month nine rooms of a royal building, which had evidently been destroyed by fire, were cleared out and explored. The sculptured slabs here were in their general character similar to those already described at some length in the *Nimrud* discoveries, warlike scenes however predominating. One vigorous battle-piece represents warriors wearing high conical helmets crowded into a chariot that looks all wheels, driving at full gallop from some successful field, and bearing off in triumph the head of a fallen foe, which one of the group holds by the hair. The chariot is supposed to be one taken from the enemy, as its build is not Assyrian. From the

inscription—if we may rely upon arrow-heads—we learn that the contest had taken place in Elam, other-



WARRIORS IN CHARIOT, CARRYING HEAD.

wise Susiana, one of the great empires of the ancient world, and a troublesome neighbour to the Assyrians in their later days. The head carried off in vindictive triumph is presumed to be that of the monarch of the country. The frame-work behind the chariot is possibly that of a tent, from which the covering has been removed. There is amazing life and spirit in this design. How the eager, bending figure of the charioteer, aids the idea of swiftness, already indicated by the fleet steed, ramping and striding, as those big wheels go recklessly over the dead and dying who are strewn on the ground! It is altogether admirable, notwithstanding the impossible man underneath the spring of the horse's fore-feet. Good drawing is very important, no artist or critic will deny that. But a study of these Assyrian remains will convince any one that it is not essential to the vivid telling of a story, or the expression, with almost startling truth, of vigorous action. Then the figures at the back of

the chariot—they have precisely the look of men who have just done their duty, and who know it. You may see such calm, determined figures as these—for it is not the face only—going to their post of danger on an English fire-engine.

The Assyrians in these battle-pieces are armed with spears, bows and arrows, some of them with maces—these are short clubbed weapons—and battle-axes. The maces and battle-axes were a comparatively modern luxury. They wear tall helmets, in some instances crested, and are clad in coats of mail. They also carry large shields. How excessively nervous fighting people must have felt the first time they went into battle after shields had gone out of fashion! But indeed there has been less need of such defence since fire-arms came into use, seeing one reads that it takes nearly a man's weight in bullets before he is killed by them. Sword-cut and lance-thrust, *minus* shields, would have done that bad business sooner. The adversaries with whom the Assyrians are contending in these scenic representations, utterly undefended by armour, have nothing but bows and arrows to make themselves disagreeable with; and their war-chariots are drawn by mules, generally reckoned rather sober, plodding beasts. No wonder they came off "second best" in an encounter with the heavier armed Assyrians, aided by fiery, snorting, prancing steeds.

Two of the slabs here found formed a scene a little out of the beaten track. Fugitives, apparently fleeing from the conquering Assyrians, were crowding into vessels, some with sails, others with oars only, from a castle on the sea-shore. A man, standing at the

gate, was giving a child into the outstretched arms of a woman on board. The ships (on whose decks stand both soldiers with spears, and tall-capped women), like our ships of the middle ages, have their sides covered with shields, which are also hung on the battlements of the castle. Assyrian artists apparently found it difficult to represent the sea; so in these designs not only are there undulating lines, which might suggest water, but, to prevent the possibility of mistake, the same is studded with sundry kinds of fish!

Other slabs are painful, representing the treatment of prisoners of war, so we will not describe them. "The dark places of the earth are full of cruelty:" Assyria was assuredly no exception; alas, that those portions of it flooded by God's own light of life should be included in this condemnation. Among the groups of captives are some who appear to be Jews. The accompanying inscriptions reveal that the monarch whose successes are thus commemorated was named Asshur-bani-pal, otherwise Sardanapálus the younger, son of Esar-haddon, and grandson of Sen-nacherib, both of them familiar Old Testament names. The latter king, who is believed to have built this palace, has one form of his royal state exhibited on a slab now discovered. He stands in a richly ornamented chariot, a sort of state coach, drawn, not by two prancing horses, but by two of the usual very staid beardless attendants of those courts, who bear the pole, terminating in an erect horse's head, between them. What this was for—whether it was full dress or undress it is impossible to say. The king stands in a formal attitude, as if blessing, praying, or im-

precating, with embroidered parasol overhead, fly flap in the rear as usual. Part of the slab was destroyed,



SENNACHERIB IN HIS CHARIOT.

but from the accessories of mace-bearers, men with forked staves, ropes, and so on, it is judged that something important and stately was commemorated by it; most likely the removal of a winged bull, a ceremony at which it is evident the monarch sometimes assisted. The chariot looks exceedingly like a Croydon basket-carriage.

Here Mr. Layard's labours came to an end for a time, and he himself returned to England.



CHAPTER VII.

A SECOND VISIT.

THE details of early exploration have been given at such length, that for those of a later date it must suffice to give the results, and that with some brevity.

Towards the close of 1849 Mr. Layard resumed his labours both at Nineveh and Kouyunjik, and found things both great and small to reward his toil.

Among interesting objects at Kouyunjik was a series of slabs conjectured to represent the taking of Lachish by Sennacherib, the monarch who built this palace, together with the half of a colossal bas-relief of Dagon, the fish-god of the Assyrians, and others. At Nimrúd, in the North-west Palace, numerous small articles—cups, dishes, bronze bells, with ornaments in ivory for chariot, horse, and house furniture—were discovered. Some of the dishes were beautifully embossed or engraved with hunting scenes, or ornamental patterns. Shields, swords, daggers, spear and arrow heads, as though an armoury had been hit upon, also came to light.

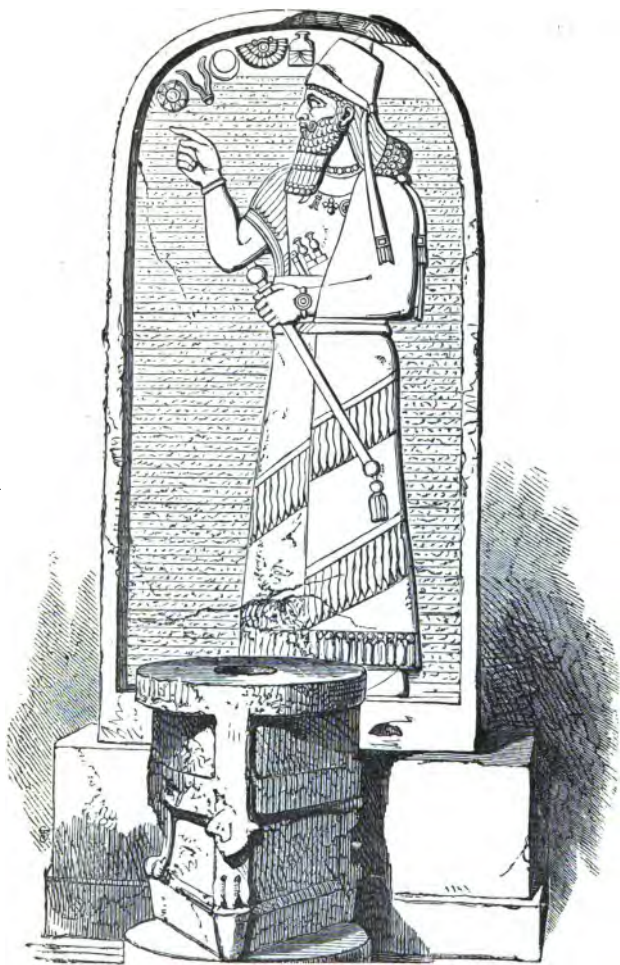
An elevated portion of the north-west corner of the mound here, which had long excited attention

EXPULSION OF EVIL BY GOOD SPIRIT.



as the supposed tomb of Sardanápálus the builder of the palace, was selected as the point of attack at that spot, and proved rich in its results. Among other discoveries was that of a small temple, supposed to have been dedicated to Nergal, the god of war of the Assyrians. The entrance to this was flanked by colossal bas-reliefs of an extraordinary character, conjectured to represent the expulsion of an evil spirit by the superior might of a good genius. Evil indeed, if we must judge by his looks, for he is certainly guilty of the sin of ugliness in an eminent degree. The head, all agape, is due to the artist's ingenuity, as it is not like anything in particular. The body is feathered, with wings and tail to match. There is something very impertinent-looking in that small projecting tail. The fore legs are those of a lion, the hind ones of an eagle. The good genius is all astride with indignation: thunderbolts in each hand, righteous severity in his countenance, he is evidently having the best of it, as good always ought to have, over evil. The odd sickle-like instrument seen in front of one of his wings is inscrutable—something emblematical, no doubt. The sculpture itself is much injured, looking as if it had been *pecked* all over, especially the good spirit. It is almost covered with inscriptions. A little further within the temple were more bas-reliefs of Dagon. He is figured as a strange compound of man and fish, the latter forming a sort of short cloak and head-dress for the human being with which it is conjoined, and who carries the sacred basket and pine-cone.

Outside the temple, standing apart on a pedestal,



SARDANAPALUS AND ALTAR.

a singularly beautiful slab was discovered, between eight and nine feet high, and about four broad, by fifteen inches thick, bearing upon it, in higher relief than usual, a fine full-length figure of the great Sardanápálus himself, in his priestly dress, including the sacred collar. Three daggers peep out from his girdle; above his head are the sacred symbols of Assyrian faith. The back-ground of the slab is covered with inscriptions. In front of it was placed an altar of stone, giving rise to the conjecture that the splendid founder of the North-west Palace had been deified by his people after his death.

At Kouyunjik also numerous bas-reliefs of great interest were disclosed by the explorer's picks and spades. They were designed to illustrate the various events, peaceful and warlike, of the reign of King Sennacherib, who was, on these slabs, represented in rather a more favourable light than his renowned far-off predecessor. Of this vast building, which covered a hundred acres of ground, a part only has been explored. But the portion whose discovery is due to Mr. Layard amounted to nearly two miles of sculpture in relief, with twenty-seven entrances, guarded, after the Assyrian fashion, by winged monsters of various kinds.

Both here and at Nimrúd subsequent discoveries of a similar nature have been made, by Mr. Ross, Mr. Rassam (Mr. Layard's friend and companion), and Mr. Loftus. One of the last fruits of the North-west Palace at Nimrúd was a particularly fine profile bas-relief of a good genius, with the usual cone and basket. He wears a crested horned cap.



FIGURE WITH FIR-CONE.

One Assyrian palace was so like another in construction, as revealed by their ruins, that the same brief description may suffice for all. The platform of earth, or sun-dried bricks, upon which the building was erected, appears to have been raised from thirty to fifty feet above the level around. It was faced with stone-work, and was ascended either by broad flights of steps or by an inclined plane. The various apartments of the building usually opened into large courts; one of these, at Khorsabad, measured about two hundred and fifty feet in length, by a hundred and fifty in width; and were themselves separated by walls from six to fifteen feet thick. The walls were constructed of sun-dried bricks, and panelled to the height of nine or twelve feet with the sculptured slabs we have been describing, which were fastened by cramps and pegs of wood, iron, or copper. Above the row of sculptured slabs the walls, for four or five feet in height, were plastered and painted both ornamentally and artistically. Cedars from Lebanon furnished the wood-work. The floors were of brick or stone, sometimes beautifully patterned or bearing arrow-head inscriptions. The ceilings were painted in compartments, or inlaid with ivory. The apartments, which were very numerous, were, as has been said, lighted from above, and abounded in doors, two or three to one room.

What the palaces looked like when they stood perfect in all their glory, must, to a great extent, be left, like many other things Assyrian, to conjecture. On this subject antiquaries and architects differ; they are not even agreed as to whether these buildings

had one or two stories. And here again we can only say, that where the learned differ, it is impossible for us, who occupy the room of the unlearned, to decide between them. One very high authority, who believes that Assyrian palaces had more than one story, has given us an ideal picture of their interior, with the great



INTERIOR OF ASSYRIAN PALACE—RESTORED.

winged bulls in what is known to be their proper position, at the entrance of galleries or halls, together

with the sculptured slabs lining the walls, which we also know to be correct. He has further peopled it with officials, guards, and warriors with their standards; while up aloft, watching those down below, are some Assyrian ladies. Looking through the building we see the chariot of the king himself, the parasol held over his head by an attendant, indicating the royal presence.

It should be said that those who hold that Assyrian palaces were only one story high, rest their conclusion on the circumstance that not only have no remains or trace of staircases been anywhere discovered, but that there is nothing of any kind to indicate where a staircase might have been.

We may here usefully sum up our recently acquired knowledge of the long lost city, by saying that the ruins are included in a tract of country about sixty miles in circumference—if we may use such a word for a sort of long square—east of the Tigris, in latitude lying between about 36° and 37° N., and longitude 43° to 44° E. But whether this tract includes four or five cities, of which Nineveh is one, or whether the whole of the wide-spread mounds form the remains of the ancient city of “three days’ journey,” is not yet decisively settled.





CHAPTER VIII.

ASSYRIANS AT HOME.

WE have now gone through the details of unearthing the long-buried remains of a powerful extinct empire. Other mounds scattered over the wide district that comprehends Nineveh the Great still keep their secret; but enough has been done to bring us face to face with a people so long perished from off the face of the earth, that even for centuries before our own era they had stood the shadow only of a mighty name. Let us in the next place glance at the results of these discoveries, so far as their patient study has been the means of making us acquainted with Assyrian life and manners.

To begin with the people themselves:—the Assyrians appear to have been a handsome, largely made, robust race, possessing great bodily strength; an endowment which had perhaps something to do with leading to their love of war, and its next best excitement, the chase of wild, powerful beasts, such as the lion, the wild bull, and the ass. Their character is supposed to have been marked by strong religious feeling, according to their idolatrous notion of religion; invocations to their gods abounding even

in the common occurrences of life, as instanced by their sculptures and written records. Further, we find in Holy Writ how strong was their expression of sorrow for sin—from the king in his palace to his meanest subject—immediately on the appalling announcement of speedy destruction, made to them by the reluctant prophet of the Most High God. These vast sculpture-lined halls, with their stately portal-guards of winged bulls and lions, smiling in eternal stone, may have witnessed the very monarch there spoken of, rising from the throne whose crumbling fragments have just been dug up, throwing off with trembling haste the rich embroidered robe with its tasseled fringes, that we now know by sight, and covering himself, in its place, with sackcloth and ashes, as he, heathen as he was, bade his people “cry mightily unto God,” and put away the evil of their doings, if haply God might repent and turn away his fierce anger from them. The expression of sorrow was strong—men fasting alike from food and drink, and the very cattle wailing in that torrid clime with the intolerable thirst of a three days’ abstinence from water; it was also sincere, for God, who knows the hearts of men, accepted it as such. But, taking their entire history as a nation, we find that it was with them as it is with ourselves—that religious feeling does not always imply religious principle; for their pre-eminence in treachery, and lies, and stubborn pride, is strongly asserted by inspired writers themselves. The intellectual powers of the Assyrians are rated rather high by those who have most studied this people; and, for their period,

it is evident that civilization had attained a considerable pitch among them, before they were swept away from off the earth.

In an absolute monarchy the king is the state. But in Assyria he was something more, he was priest also, and offered sacrifice as such. The ordinary dress of the monarch has already been described. His priestly costume differed somewhat from this; for though the usual long close-fitting robe was retained, over it was thrown an outer covering, wrapped tightly round the figure, including the left arm, which was thus bandaged, as if in a sling, to the side. This dress was girded at the waist. Its lower part was ornamented with two slanting rows of deep fringe. A mace, or club, was usually held, near its upper part, in the left hand. A small statue of Asshur-izir-pal, otherwise Sardanapálus the Great, one of the very few "in the round" that have yet been discovered, shows us one form of this priestly costume, a simpler one than in the majority of instances, which represent the royal cap, or crown, the collar, composed of sacred emblems, with daggers in the belt, as parts of it. The absence of any covering of the head is remarkable in this statue, nor is it known why so unusual a departure from Assyrian custom as that of the king appearing bare-headed, should have taken place. The instrument in the right hand, terminating in a half circle, must be supposed connected with the religious functions of the monarch, as it is seen among the paraphernalia of the good genius. The inscription on the breast of this figure, which is about three feet and

a half in height, tells the world that he was the conqueror, from the upper part of the Tigris to Lebanon and the Great Sea, who had reduced under his rule all countries from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. The statue was discovered during Mr. Layard's second visit to Nineveh.

Another sculpture, a bas-relief from Kouyunjik, represents the king engaged in what appears to be a religious ceremony in connection with the favourite royal sport of lion-hunting. The products of the chase, four great lions, laid with their noses all turned the same way, and with a provokingly sleepy human



SARDANAPALUS IN PRIESTLY COSTUME.

expression of countenance, are having a libation (that is, liquid—wine, milk, or water—solemnly offered or poured out to the gods in sacrifice) poured upon

them by the king in state costume, attended by his chief officers and court musicians. The whole are grouped around something that looks very like an altar, upon which appears to be placed the sacred wedge or arrow-head, the original element of the written characters of the Assyrian language.

It is not easy to make out private life of more than four-and-twenty centuries past, especially private royal life, of which little is generally known even at the time. One bas-relief, however, from Kouyunjik admits us to a single scene. It is that of the king and queen, possibly Asshur-bani-pal himself and his wife, from whose palace it was taken, apparently at table, surrounded by officials in full state. The king half reclines on a couch, after the Eastern fashion; her majesty, less favoured, sits bolt upright in an exceedingly uncomfortable-looking straight-backed chair, which, however, it is some relief to one's feelings to find cushioned. Between them stands an elegantly shaped table, covered by a cloth, upon which various articles are placed. Each is in the act of raising a bowl to the lips, contents unknown; but the whole arrangement gives the idea of Assyrian kings and their wives being on more equal terms than they usually were in the East. The bow and quiver of the monarch lie on the table behind him. The dress of the queen is not very unlike that of her lord, but she, in addition to the close-fitting garments, wears a sort of mantle, or cope, embroidered and fringed. The "back hair" of each is dressed alike, but in place of the lofty cap or crown of the king, his queen has a sort

of mural coronet, set on deep round the head. She further exhibits, we are sorry to say, the most tremendous spiky ear-rings that ever afflicted human ears, or offended human eyes. Her features are pleasing, so that we must conclude that the Assyrian men did not carry off all the beauty. "Clumsy shoes," in place of sandals, complete her costume.

The chase was the special favourite sport of the Assyrian monarchs. Some of the most spirited sculptures yet rescued bear ample testimony to this, while they graphically exhibit the various ways in which wild beasts, chiefly lions and bulls, were hunted. Milder creatures, such as deer, hares, and the like, which we, in these later days, are well content to run ourselves out of breath after, appear to have been little thought of among these stalwart Orientals.

It sounds exceedingly odd, but the fact is that when his Assyrian majesty followed the chase, he chiefly did it in a chariot. Anything more ludicrous than going a-hunting in—say an English curricie, which is the vehicle most like an Assyrian chariot—cannot well be imagined. Nevertheless, except when he did it on foot, which became more common in the later days of the monarchy, this was the mode in which the king took his sylvan pleasure. On these occasions he was dressed as for battle, carrying bow and arrows, spear, sword, and daggers. His shield hung at the back of the chariot, which was drawn by two or three fiery horses urged on to utmost speed by the whip of the charioteer: two quivers, containing an axe as well as arrows, were suspended

cross-wise at its side—a formidable box of tools, each of them. The spear stood erect in a holder attached to the chariot, ready to be snatched when wanted. Tall sugar-loaf-capped attendants followed, carrying shield and short sword. When the prey was roused, the king dashed after it in his chariot, discharging his arrows with vigorous arm at the bulky creature, who was sometimes pierced right through with the shafts. In this bas-relief (from the North-west Palace at Nimrúd) the sport seems to have been good, for while one huge lion lies slain with a couple of arrows



LION HUNT.

sticking in him, a second, spite of two of these stinging impeding wounds, is springing on the back of the chariot from which the king is taking aim at him for the third time. The drawing of this design produces a ludicrous impression, for at first glance it looks as if one of the attendants in the rear were ignominiously pulling the unfortunate beast by the tail, or at least cutting its tail in two with his knife; a species of assault from behind that would have been

exceedingly shabby had it really taken place, instead of being only bad drawing.

The lion's attack was sometimes received with spear and shield, or perhaps the monarch stepped down and met him, face to face, on foot, seeking to stab him to the heart with a short stout thrusting sword. Attendants waited behind their master with store of weapons, which he received from them as wanted, choosing from this living armoury the particular implement required by the exigency of the moment. Occasionally, not often, these stood on guard with shield and spear to protect their master; but this does not seem to have been considered very sportsman-like. Your true descendant of the "mighty hunter before the Lord" was content to let his own hand keep his head. One very vigorous design from Konyunjik gives us the king, a short stiff-set fellow with plenty of pith in him, trying his chance on foot. He has seized the lion, who stands erect on his hind legs, by the throat, with his left hand, while his right has thrust the broad strong blade through the body of the beast, the point appearing at its back. This is evidently the finishing stroke, as the lion has already a couple of arrows sticking in his head and chest. One Assyrian monarch, Asshur-bani-pal, commemorates with pride an achievement of this kind: how on foot he had encountered an enormous lion, and held him by the ear while, in the name of his gods Asshur and Istar, he slew him with a spear.

The lion was hunted either in his coverts, the reedy banks of rivers, whence he was roused by dogs which the huntsman held in a leash, or in a prepared

field to which he was conveyed, and then turned out of a sort of trap. Considerable numbers were sometimes thus destroyed in the course of one day's sport. Occasionally another plan was adopted. The king took boat, and was rowed along, shooting right and left at such lions as the beaters on both sides of the stream had roused from their lair and driven into the water. This seems to have been a comparatively mild proceeding, as armed guards surrounded their master, and the sides of the boat were scarcely low enough to leave the goaded beast much chance of leaping in among them. When killed he was pulled on board, and, his legs tied together in a bunch, slung over the stern, looking like the sign of the golden fleece turned upside down.

Lion hunting was not simply an enjoyable sport with Assyrian kings and warriors: there seems to have been a degree of solemnity attached to it, whether religious or courtly is perhaps hard to decide. The libation poured over four lions in a row by the king himself has already been mentioned. But other ceremonies were also practised in connection with it, of which our cut, from a bas-relief found, like the preceding ones, in the North-west Palace at Nimrúd, affords an illustration.

The king has had a good day's sport, for there at his feet lies the dead lion, which has been borne in state from the spot where he received his death-wound. The monarch, crowned and robed, stands with his left hand resting on his bow—a favourite attitude; his right hand raises a shallow, fluted drinking-vessel: very possibly its contents are to be

first tasted, and then poured over the victim of his "great courage." The inevitable fly-flap is in



RETURN FROM LION HUNT.

front; behind it stand two attendants with folded hands, an attitude of reverence; behind them musicians are playing upon stringed instruments, struck with what classical writers call a *plectrum*—that is, a quill or slender rod. Armed men attend on the other side of their sovereign. It was altogether, evidently, a very imposing piece of work to kill a lion; though it must be added that the last two figures to the left of the sovereign have, in the original sculpture, every appearance of grinning at the whole concern. Very irreverent of them to laugh at the king behind his back. But queer things will happen at times, or grave things will find strange chroniclers; for we can scarcely imagine it possible that these long dead and gone sculptors really intended to depict anybody making faces, even at the back, of so terrible a despot as an Assyrian monarch more than two thousand years ago.

The wild bull, an animal as strong and fierce as

the king of beasts himself, with the additional means of offence of huge curving horns, was another favourite object of the royal chase. A bas-relief, from the same source as the above, represents this phase of Assyrian sport as carried on by the great Sardanapálus—otherwise Asshur-izir-pal—himself. The king's chariot is here drawn by three horses at full speed. One big brute of a bull has already sunk beneath his prowess, and lies a helpless mass underneath the very stride of the bounding horses. The king, turning round in the chariot, has seized the other beast by



BULL HUNT.

the horn, while at the same time he thrusts his thick short sword into its head. His spear—it has a sort of pennon, like the spear of European middle ages, and the weapon of our own lancers—is seen in its rest at the hinder part of the chariot. A mounted attendant, with tall conical helmet, bow, and lance, leads a spare horse in the rear. A following slab shows the same ceremonies taking place over the defunct bull that we have seen performed in reference to the lion.

It will be noticed that the bulls in these sculptures

(and it is the same in all that have been discovered) are represented with only one horn. It has been suggested that this is simply the Assyrian fashion of drawing a profile; as, however, other profile sculptures of beasts do not show the same peculiarity, we cannot accept such a solution of the difficulty. Our own conjecture is, that this drawing of an animal, native to a far-off country near three thousand years ago, in all probability correctly represents the original of the unicorn—whatever it may have been—whose existence may thus be rescued from the region of fable to which it has long been consigned. "He hath the strength of an unicorn," says Balaam, when pronouncing his reluctant blessing upon Israel. And this was evidently a powerful beast.

The wild ass, one of the fleetest of known creatures, was hunted on horseback: no charioteering after him; they might as well have driven a four-wheeled waggon at him with the hope of catching him. Occasionally he was captured alive by some inexplicable kind of snare, the applying of which must, one thinks, have been as puzzling as the putting salt on the tails of sparrows, which is said to be the best modern method of catching them. Snare or salt once applied, the remainder of the process must have been easy. What the Assyrians did with their wild ass, after they had got him, is not stated. Deer, the wild goat, and the gazelle were chased with dogs, netted, or shot with arrows. These people were good marksmen; they would send their arrows even through a bird on the wing. All the animals we have mentioned were included in royal pursuit. Hare hunting, and such

like, together with fishing, seem to have been left to the common people, as belonging to the commissariat, rather than to sport. His majesty, however, was occasionally good enough to drive about in his chariot for the fun of looking on at this kind of game.

The Assyrians did not, apparently, use fishing-rods. The end of the line was held in the fisherman's hand, which has a singularly awkward look. Sometimes he exercised his craft seated on one of the blown-up skins with which we have seen their soldiers cross rivers; and thus he floated, or paddled himself tranquilly down the stream, filling the wicker-basket slung from his shoulder with the finny spoils of the water—if he had good luck.

The dress of the monarch, and of the higher ranks, has been already given. That of the working classes was simple enough: a scanty, short-sleeved garment, not quite reaching to the knee, belted round the waist; bare head and feet completed it. Their exuberant thatch of hair served alike for hat and umbrella. Ascending a little in the social scale came the luxury of sandals, and a little fringe on the garment, with perchance the addition of a sort of short petticoat, like that of a Highlander. Higher still, the tight trousers and boots of the military were added: very grand and very uncomfortable no doubt.

Bare heads, it should be remarked, were the rule in Assyria with all classes, save the king, the priesthood, and some officials. One of the latter, a musician—in that country they had bands of musicians—wears a tall cap like the half of a fish, the tail part

rising high in air above his self-satisfied countenance. The man looks as if he admired himself in it.

Of the dwellings of the ordinary people we have only one illustration, in which it is seen that the houses were detached, small, flat-roofed, dome or cone covered, and lighted from above as there are no windows. In this last respect they resemble the palaces that have been unearthed. Inside, the furniture was simple, varying of course with the social rank of the occupant. Cross-legged tables, clumsy block stools, low beds with one end raised for the head, a slender jug, hung on a nail (terminating in a point it could not stand on end), dishes and bowls, are the chief articles seen in humble habitations.

In the abodes of royalty the furnishing was ample and magnificent. The cross-legged tables—they appear to have been favourites—were elegantly designed and ornamented; larger ones, dining tables very likely, on perpendicular supports, are found of good workmanship. One, as shown in a bas-relief from Khorsabad, is really beautiful to a modern eye. The legs, having horizontal flutes at intervals, terminate in lions' claws; these rest upon a plain plinth, which, in its turn, is supported by feet shaped like an inverted fir, or Indian corn, cone. A well-patterned bar connects the legs above the plinth, rams' heads decorate the corners of the table itself.

The throne and the chairs were elaborately carved, and ornamented with rich hangings. Wood, ivory, and bronze, were all used in their composition. The footstools—for state-seats were high enough to require them even for men—were equally rich. The

couch of the monarch was like that of his meaner subjects, save that he was accommodated with some extra bed-clothes—a pillow and coverlet in addition to the mattress. “Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown:” so thought the great Assyrian monarchs, and took unto themselves a bolster.

Cumbrous as was the Assyrian throne, it was carried about by its occupant for the time, to be ready for use on all important occasions. On it he sat when receiving the spoil of captured cities, or such of the enemy as evil fortune had made his prisoners, and whom the monarch was at times gracious enough to put to death with his own hands; also in giving audience to such of his own subjects as were privileged to speak to him—his visir and the chief of the beardless attendants being apparently the only two so honoured.

Ornamental stands, to support different articles, were also used in the palaces, much as they might be in European houses of any pretension. Further, there were glazed pottery and glass, some of it elegantly shaped, as lamps, wine-vases, drinking-cups, dishes, bowls, and the like. Ivory carvings, cut gems, and other items of high class luxury, were also not rare in these “kings’ houses.”

The war chariot of the Assyrians has been described. They had also covered carriages—a sort of sentry-box on four wheels, driven by a standing coachman—supposed to be for the exclusive use of ladies. As these vehicles had no windows, a drive in one of them could not have been a very exhilarating sort of thing. For carrying burdens, they had

carts, drawn by horses or men. Their implements of labour comprised ploughs, huge two-handed saws, most modern-looking hatchets, picks and shovels, the latter being shaped like the ace of spades; indeed just similar, save for the want of the cross handle, to the spades used by street labourers to shovel up gravel, not square like the digging tool. They were also, as we have seen, well acquainted with the various mechanical powers of the lever, the pulley, and the roller.

Their imitative skill in drawing, and power in working stone, have already been sufficiently instanced.

The records of Assyrian history, that are now being gradually deciphered, are found engraven, in arrow-heads, on stone, tablets and cylinders of baked clay, and seals of clay and other material. The inscriptions on clay have of course been impressed while it was soft—we know not with what tools—and afterwards hardened by fire into imperishable characters.





CHAPTER IX.

ASSYRIANS AT WAR.

THE "stout heart" of the kings of Assyria led them into frequent war, and their victories they delighted to record in enduring stone. A succession of these scenes, with which the walls of their palaces were lined, will give us a slight sketch of an Assyrian successful campaign.

The composition of the army, as has been said, included chariots, cavalry, and infantry. The war chariot has been described. The chief weapons with which its occupant was furnished were the bow, short sword, and lance; the last two of which are never portrayed in use. The bow was his main reliance, and the arrows were launched either from the chariot itself, or, with greater daring, from the ground, to which the warrior leaped, and where, a little in advance of the horses' heads, his shield-bearer protected him, lance in hand. The dress of the warrior consisted of a tight-fitting garment, girded round the waist, or of a coat of mail very similar to the scale armour of our early times, descending to the knee, and with very short sleeves, leaving the sinewy arms bare. He also generally wore a helmet, without

visor—that is, one that leaves the face exposed; but it had at times defences of scales, covering the ears, the neck, the chin, and even the shoulders.

In the earliest period of which we have sculpture-records, the cavalry wore either simple tunics and skull-caps, or embroidered ones with pointed helmets. The bow again was the favourite weapon, though sword and shield are seen. They rode without saddles, their bare legs and feet drawn up in very much the attitude of a butcher's boy, riding with his tray before him. In later times spearmen as well as archers were comprehended in the cavalry, and their dress was both more complete and more ornamented. To the fringed tunic were added close-fitting trousers, of a diagonal cross-barred pattern, and boots, laced in front, reaching almost to the knee. In the time of Sennacherib, a coat of mail, with leather breeches and jack boots, formed one of the cavalry uniforms. The horsemen also had saddles, and rode more gracefully than did their early predecessors, who were all knees and nose together. The horses, too, in addition to their ornamental trappings, at last acquired some defence in the shape of a sort of body-cloth, supposed to be of leather or felt.

The foot-soldiers of the early period wore a short fringed, belted garment, not quite down to the knees, pointed helmets, and occasionally sandals. Their arms were sword, shield, bow and arrows, short spear, with a sort of bludgeon, or mace, made of metal or wood. As civilization advanced, the infantry were divided into light and heavy troops; the light, clad in a simple short petticoat belted round

the waist, the heavy having a coat of mail over their fringed garment; they further enjoyed the protection of a shield, held before each archer by a comrade, while the petticoated hero had no such defence. A third class of foot-soldiers, from the completeness of their equipment, possibly ranked with our foot-guards. These wore a robe to the feet, and mail on the upper part of the person. They had always one or two attendants, and in action had fixed before them the tall wicker shield already spoken of, which covered them from head to foot. It needed to be tall, as this class always discharged their arrows standing, instead of kneeling on one knee like the others. The spearmen were distinguished by high crested helmets, instead of the pointed ones of the archers. They also wore cross-belts, like our own foot. Slingers made their appearance in the field in the time of Sennacherib. They were fully clad in helmet, cuirass, garment to the knees, trousers, and boots. Two or three rapid swings round the head, caused the sling to discharge its shot—a stone—with immense velocity.

It was the wont of the kings of Assyria to lead out their forces in person. Crowned, robed, armed, and attended by the usual officials, the monarch's stately chariot was conspicuous in the midst of the army, one portion of which preceded, and the other followed him on the march. One of the sculptured slabs of which we have spoken, represents what may be supposed to be the beginning of a successful expedition, led out by the great Asshur-izir-pal himself. The army, such as we have described it,

has been collected to invade some neighbour, destined to go down under the shock of that mighty host flung upon him. A river has to be crossed to get at him, so that troops, chariots, and horses have to be boated, or got over on inflated skins. The river is repre-



EMBARKATION OF AN ARMY.

sented by violent curved lines—very like the curled horse-hair contents of a cushion pulled to pieces—in the midst of which is seen a boat, managed by a couple of naked sailors, one of whom holds an oar. Another unclad being is steadying a chariot, which has just been placed on board; a second chariot is being raised on the shoulders of one man—they could not have been very heavy—in order to follow it. On the bank stand two soldiers in pointed helmets, with an unhelmed beardless fellow between them. We have surmised that “Stick” was an institution among the Assyrians; and here it is again in the form of an unmistakable whip, flourished by the beardless, and doubtless destined for the bare backs of the

labourers who are toiling around, two of whom are inflating skins to carry over the troops. Their passage of the river in this fashion has already begun, two soldiers having launched themselves into the water, clasping their swimming machines.

Further on we find them in mid-stream. There are two boats, like washing-tubs, each rowed by two



PASSAGE OF A RIVER.

men, and supposed to have been made of wicker-work covered with hides, which were pitched over with bitumen to make them water-tight. A chariot is seen in the second boat, which it nearly fills. Four men are swimming on skins, a fifth is trusting to his own skill. Horses are also contending with the current, their tails tied in that odd-looking fashion—like a gigantic sausage, with a string tight round the waist—which seems to have been a favourite one in Assyria.

A third bas-relief presents the mighty monarch himself on the point of being landed at the other side of the river. He stands, bow in hand, in his

chariot, which has been rowed over in a sort of long boat, containing, in addition to the sailors, two of his ordinary beardless attendants, with one of whom, who is pointing towards some object, he appears to be speaking. This boat shows the common mode of steering, which was by a long broad-ended paddle, worked on a high forked stern; two men are also



PASSAGE OF A RIVER.

hauling it with ropes. Horses swim after the boat, their halters held by one on board. A man is seen floating on a skin as usual.

King, soldiers, horses, chariots, and the material of war being all at last landed in this fashion, the next thing was to proceed to business.

The first object in Assyrian warfare was to fight a pitched battle, in which chariot thundered against chariot, and spearmen, archers, and slingers did their best against each other. If the Assyrians prevailed, the enemy was hotly pursued both by horse and foot, eager to slay and cut off the heads of the vanquished, which were then carried in triumph to the camp to earn the accustomed reward. Heads, prisoners, and spoil were taken account of by officials. Driven

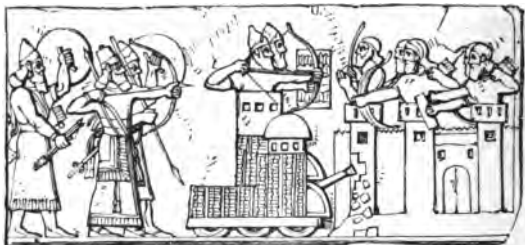
from the field, however, a stand may be made in the castles and defended cities of an invaded country. If this were the case, thither followed the staunch Assyrians, their pioneers, of which they had corps, like ourselves, clearing the way when needful with their axes. The axe was both double and single-headed.

On taking ground before a fortified place the troops were drawn up in due order, the spearmen in two ranks, the first kneeling, the second stooping, to enable the archers, who were placed behind, to shoot their arrows over the heads of their comrades. This is how our modern squares of infantry are posted. Or perhaps they were stationed in groups of three; an archer to shoot, his shield-bearer to cover him, while the third, a swordsman, stood ready to use his weapon in defence of all three, should a sortie be made from the castle.

It was, perchance, attempted to scale the walls. In this case tall ladders were raised, up which spearmen and archers clambered, whilst archers and slingers from below poured in a storm of missiles, under cover of which their comrades ascended. From the walls great stones were hurled down on the heads of the assailants, in addition to showers of arrows and sling-stones, with cataracts of hot water. If these failed to beat back the besiegers, then it was hand to hand, with spear and sword, that the battle was fought out from the summit of the ladders and the battlements of the walls; at whose base meanwhile, very possibly, a corps, having advanced stealthily under cover of their shields, were mining away with crowbars,

pick-axes, and even the points of their spears and swords.

If the walls were to be breached, movable towers and battering-rams were drawn up against them. These usually contained each two archers, one of whom, protected by the shield of his companion, shot amain, while the ram was pounding at the walls.



SIEGE OF A CITY.

The king here has left his chariot, and is on foot among the attacking party. His armour-bearer stands behind him with arrows in one hand, to supply his lord if need be, shield in the other, to take care of himself we must suppose. The ram has knocked some stones out of the wall; so, warned in time, one of the warriors in the castle holds out his hand as seeking speech with the enemy, hoping by surrender to ward off the wretched fate that awaited those taken by assault. This ram is constructed of wicker-work, and moves on six wheels. The sculpture also shows the Assyrian method of drawing the bow, which was to the shoulder instead of to the ear, as we used to do.

The place carried, destruction and spoliation at

once began. Fire, or the crows and picks of a legion of labourers, soon leveled it with the ground. The captives were hurried before the monarch, whose throne had been erected for the purpose in his camp. There, bound, or more barbarously rendered helpless, they prostrated themselves before him, who perchance placed his foot upon their necks, perchance slew them with his own hand. The heads of those who had fallen, together with the spoil, were brought either to him or to one of his officers, who recorded in writing—arrow-heads—their number and amount. The inhabitants, women and children too, were sometimes carried bodily away, to people some far-off corner of the conqueror's dominions. The neighbourhood around was laid waste, the trees even being cut down; some for timber, which was much wanted at home, Assyria, as has been said, being rather a treeless country; others—as the date-palm—in order to destroy sustenance. The latter were cut half through and then forcibly broken off, leaving about two feet of trunk remaining in the soil.

It seems highly probable that some religious ceremony took place after the city was fairly taken, as a sort of thanksgiving to the gods whom, as we have seen, this people was in the habit of invoking and acknowledging on all occasions. The gods were false; the principle was true. A bas-relief from the North-west Palace at Nimrúd appears to confirm this idea. There stands the king in state, parasol over his head, chariot led behind, in conversation with one who, from his wearing the peculiar sacred garment, confining the left arm, and the easy terms on which

he seems to be speaking to his sovereign, we may judge to be a priest. Above the two is seen the divine symbol.



CAPITULATION OF A CITY.

Human triumph came also: a stately procession of king, and guards, and warriors from the scene of victory to the camp. First marched soldiers carrying the severed heads—a ghastly trophy of Assyrian prowess; then two musicians sounding their harps; next, more warriors, disembarrassed of their arms and harness, no longer wanted, but bearing on high their standards, wont to be fixed in the chariot. The standard was a pole terminating in a round tablet, on which were impressed various devices of a sacred character, and it was erected in front of the chariot. Then came the King Sardanapálus in his chariot, literally crammed with himself, charioteer, and parasol-bearer, who looks as if he must inevitably tumble out behind. A groom, by whose side is another fighting man helmed and armed, leads the horses; a spare horse, richly trapped, whose rein is

held by a mounted warrior, follows. The two horizontal figures are intended to represent the slain.



PROCESSION OF THE KING.

At the camp, meanwhile, all was in a bustle to receive them with the customary honours and feasting. A curious-looking bas-relief gives us some scenes there. The circular figure to the left is the ground-plan of a citadel or fortified building, divided into four rooms, in each of which active preparations for the coming rejoicings are going on. One cook in a tall cap appears to be cutting up some animal which



GROUND PLAN OF HOUSE AND STABLES.

another holds for him. Others are making bread or boiling pots; bowls and dishes and tables are seen